# Nova Scotia Government Business Plan

For the fiscal year 2006–2007

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NOVA SCOTIA

# Message from Premier Rodney MacDonald

Our communities are strongest when our families are doing their best and succeeding, making Nova Scotia's families our first priority.

Our government is committed to the vision of a stronger, safer, healthier Nova Scotia that inspires people to succeed here at home.

Government's vision is based on traditional Nova Scotia values of hard work and community spirit. At their core, these values mean responsibility for our actions, care for our neighbours, respect for our elders, and love of our culture.

Over the past six years, the Government of Nova Scotia has put in place a solid foundation based on these fundamental Nova Scotia beliefs. It is also based on careful fiscal management—that other fundamental Nova Scotia value of living within your means. I am convinced that we can fashion an even brighter future together from the optimism and community pride we share as Nova Scotians.

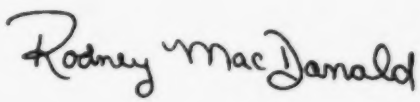
This government's priorities will be on growing the economy, protecting health care, and supporting youth, families, and communities in a safe, clean, and prosperous environment.

When we live within our means, as we have been doing and will continue to do, we can invest more in health care, in public and environmental protection, in our children's education, and in the ability of business to create new, high-quality jobs in our communities.

Thousands of dedicated public servants are needed to help in this work. We will continue our efforts to strengthen our public service. Our government will ensure that we have a healthy, safe, productive workplace. It will have the resources and diversity to respond to demographic change and the needs of all Nova Scotians, as well as contribute to the province's development.

Families, communities, public servants, and elected officials—we can all make a difference if we work together. I believe we can and will make sure that strong families will create strong communities to lead us into the future.

Sincerely,



Rodney MacDonald

# NOVA SCOTIA GOVERNMENT BUSINESS PLAN

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2006–2007

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NOVA SCOTIA

# Vision

***A stronger, safer, healthier Nova Scotia that inspires people to succeed here at home***

# Introduction

At its heart, the Government of Nova Scotia's overall priority is very simple. It is the health and welfare of Nova Scotia's families.

This priority will ensure that we accomplish our vision of a stronger, safer, healthier Nova Scotia, where successful families create secure communities in a modern, competitive society.

Delivering on the vision is more complex, involving as it does many different aspects of life.

Families need to be in good health to do their best, so they can pay their bills, plan for the future, have choices, and enjoy a good quality of life in their communities.

For quality of life, Nova Scotians must have quality health services and safe homes and communities. Our youth and older workers need education, training, and retraining opportunities to prepare them for economic opportunity throughout the province. They need an economic environment that is robust and diversified enough to offer quality opportunities in whichever villages, towns, and urban areas they choose to live.

Such an economy is bolstered by a business climate founded on superior infrastructure and sustainable practices, as well as competitive taxation and better regulation.

The Government of Nova Scotia will work with Nova Scotians to ensure that we accomplish these many aspects of our main priority, the health and well-being of Nova Scotia's families. We will do so in a climate of continued fiscal responsibility. The budget will be balanced for the fifth year in a row. This puts us in a position to continue to invest in the conditions and infrastructure that create good and lasting jobs.

Through a complex set of strategies and the determined efforts of all Nova Scotians, we will achieve our vision of a stronger, safer, healthier Nova Scotia where people can succeed.

The Government of Nova Scotia will ensure that its public services and public servants also make a positive difference in the lives of Nova Scotians. We value our employees. We will support and celebrate their professional development and the excellence it produces. And we will promote diversity in the workplace to reflect the diverse populations we serve.

The pages that follow detail how the work will be carried out. The results will be published in the annual Accountability Report at the end of the fiscal year.

# Nova Scotia's Planning Context 2006–2007

## Our Changing Demographics

Most people living in Nova Scotia were born here. More than 40 per cent still live in the communities where they grew up. Wherever they live, most residents report feeling a strong sense of community.

At the same time, population patterns are changing, and we must be prepared for that change.

The growing urbanization of Nova Scotia and the aging and anticipated shrinking of the population could bring far-reaching social and economic change.

As populations continue to move, demands for services in the urban centres will increase, while facilities in the rural areas must also be maintained.

The aging of the population will put more pressure on health and other social and economic services. And with fewer people in the workforce, we will need to improve productivity and strategically fill skills gaps to sustain economic development and the quality of life we enjoy in Nova Scotia.

Through the business plan laid out in the pages that follow, we identify strategic approaches to prepare for these important challenges.

Our plan shows that we are working on ways to create a social and economic environment where citizens of all ages are educated and cared for in response to their needs, and where people can be comfortable and content in their homes, jobs, and communities.

## Health Care Context

Nova Scotians value their high-quality health care and services. Not only do they expect them to continue, they want improvements, such as reduced wait times for emergency services and for the medical procedures they need, to cure them of serious and chronic illnesses.

As demand for services increases, so does the cost.

Traditionally, health care has been the fastest-growing segment of the budget, averaging annual increases of 8.2 per cent since 1996–1997, almost 3 per cent higher than average revenue growth. For 2005–2006, health-care expenses across government represented some $2.66 billion, 47.5 per cent of net program expenses. This is more than double the costs in 1996–1997.

Of the total cost for health care, almost 46 per cent goes to running hospitals, including nursing and other staff. Just over 20 per cent goes to paying physicians. The remaining 34 per cent is divided up among

long-term care, Pharmacare, home care, emergency services, and other health services.

This year, Nova Scotia is increasing its investment in the Departments of Health and Health Promotion and Protection by $217.1 million. District health authorities (DHAs) will receive a $79 million increase in their budgets, bringing total spending for health-care treatment and service delivery in the Department of Health to $2.76 billion.

Growth in health-care costs is not expected to abate in the near future. The challenge will be to control spending growth to protect our ability to continue to deliver the health services and other essential services that people need.

## Health Promotion and Protection Context

The government of Nova Scotia has created the new Department of Health Promotion and Protection to achieve better health outcomes and contribute to the long-term sustainability of the health-care system. In addition to the benefits of good health in and of itself, physical well-being lowers the health-care bill, which is unsustainable at current levels of growth.

The Department of Health Promotion and Protection will co-operate closely with the Department of Health and other partners in government and the community to help Nova Scotians make better health choices. Good nutrition and physical activity support the development of positive children's behaviour, school performance, and overall cognitive development.

The new department will also sharpen the province's focus on emergency preparedness planning, to protect citizens in an emergency through the development of a more integrated public health system.

Public health concerns that have recently captured attention are the potential for infectious diseases such as SARS and avian flu, as well as extreme weather events such as hurricanes and tsunamis and disasters caused by human error or terrorism.

Better promoting and protecting the well-being of Nova Scotians is expected to take some of the strain off health-care funding. This will allow us to sustain a robust health-care system and also provide support for the many other priorities that help us develop the economy, protect the environment and nurture our families and communities.

## Economic Context

Nova Scotia's economy continued its upward trend in 2005, with an estimated real GDP growth of 1.9 per cent. This was up from 1.4 per cent growth in 2004. There is every indication that Nova Scotia will continue to achieve economic growth, with an anticipated growth of 2.2 per cent in 2006 and 2.0 per cent in 2007.

The province has reached the highest employment levels it has seen since the mid-1970s, with a total of 443,100 workers employed in Nova Scotia last year. Most were employed in the wholesale and retail trades as well as in the health-care and social assistance sectors. The employment rate is expected to grow by 0.9 per cent for both 2006 and 2007.

The strong provincial economy generated revenue from all sources, primarily from income taxes and offshore royalties.

The higher Canadian dollar contributed to strong capital investments in both the public and private sectors. However, it posed challenges to Nova Scotians who export goods, such as tires, lumber, wood pulp, and seafood. The dollar value of exports dropped by 0.5 per cent from last year, but Nova Scotian industries are expected to adjust to the higher exchange rate and show growth in 2006.

Nova Scotia's economy has a number of ongoing challenges.

There is a shift away from the more traditional resource industries such as fishing, mining, and shipbuilding to the labour-intensive service industries such as contact centres, health care, construction, and scientific and technical jobs. More people are moving from the rural to the urban areas to take advantage of these opportunities.

Nova Scotia is also experiencing slower population growth and an aging population. The consequences are a reduction in the size of the workforce and increased demand for health care and other social services.

There is also a global shortage of skilled workers, which increases competition on the local, national, and international fronts. The province is now in a position where the demand for labour in many sectors is higher that the number of workers available.

In 2006–2007, government will continue to work with the Nova Scotia Community College to increase enrolments to meet the demands of the marketplace and help school boards expand co-operative education links with the community college.

With continued growth in the economy and good fiscal management, Nova Scotia is in a position to invest in measures like these to address our long-term challenges.

Nova Scotia is also making a number of changes in personal income tax designed to improve the competitive nature of the provincial tax climate.

## *Financial Context*

The Province of Nova Scotia will continue its commitment to strong fiscal management in 2006–2007. Central to this is the legislated requirement to balance the province's budget and produce surpluses sufficient to implement the debt reduction plan.

In 2006–2007, the province will bring in its fifth consecutive balanced budget, after ending the 2005–2006 fiscal year with a forecasted surplus of $151 million.

Nova Scotia has taken a number of important steps to manage the debt in recent years. In addition to running surpluses for the past five years, the $830 million received from the Offshore Accord with the federal government was placed directly on the province's cash debt. This is generating significant ongoing savings in debt-servicing costs.

As set down in the debt reduction plan, net direct debt will start to decline in 2007–2008. Within this plan, the government will proceed with planned capital investment in economic and social infrastructure such as highways and schools that is critical to the long-term growth of the provincial economy.

Increased provincial revenues will be used to enhance essential programs and services such as health care and education. The province will make additional strategic investments to benefit Nova Scotia's families and communities and future generations. Added investments in education and economic development are designed to create high-quality jobs and attract and keep skilled workers.

Federal sources continue to be essential to Nova Scotia's ability to offer programs and services at levels comparable to other provinces. The government will continue to press firmly for an equitable and adequate share of federal/provincial revenues. The province is pleased that the federal government has recognized what is now known as the "fiscal imbalance."

The government acknowledges the importance of a competitive tax environment in promoting economic growth. A number of measures are being undertaken to improve Nova Scotia's long-term competitive tax environment and to leave more tax dollars in the pockets of Nova Scotians.

## Social and Environmental Context

Nova Scotia is the first province to commission an external review of the strengths and limitations of its public health system following the SARS outbreak of 2003. This review led to the creation in February 2006 of the Department of Health Promotion and Protection, which consolidated public health functions to strengthen the province's public health management.

Emerging global public health issues such as pandemic influenza and the province's recent experiences with extreme weather conditions have highlighted the importance of preparing for emergencies and promoting the highest standards of public health and safety.

This year, the government of Nova Scotia will make additional investments in public health protection and emergency preparedness that will improve our ability to prevent or recover from emergency or disaster.



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# Government of Nova Scotia—Corporate Priorities 2006–2007

- Families and Communities
- Health Promotion and Protection
- Community Safety
- Economic Development and Infrastructure
- Environment

# Government of Nova Scotia —Core Business Areas

The Government Business Plan is grouped around six core business areas:

1. Families and Communities
2. Health and Health Care
3. Education
4. The Economy
5. The Environment
6. Government Services

Core business areas are the social or economic sectors in which the Government of Nova Scotia is active in providing fundamental services to citizens, or the sectors in which Nova Scotians expect their government to play a significant role on their behalf. The core business areas align closely with government's priorities and serve as a framework for the central policy objectives of the government.

In each of these basic areas, specific priorities are linked to the overall priorities and vision of the Government of Nova Scotia. These are described in greater detail in the sections that follow.

# 1. Families

Investing in Nova Scotia's families and communities is the starting point for advancing the Government of Nova Scotia's agenda for 2006–2007. We will provide every opportunity for our neighbourhoods and communities to prosper, to be vibrant, and to be safe.

Our communities have strategic as well as intrinsic importance. They reflect Nova Scotia's high quality of life, which along with our natural environment, is one of the province's competitive advantages.

To maintain our lifestyle and competitive advantage, Nova Scotia must continue to develop healthy, safe, diverse communities, where families thrive, seniors are valued and involved, and young people can be confident of finding opportunities to learn, work, and stay and raise families of their own.

## *Families and Communities Priorities 2006–2007*

### Families and Communities

#### *Priority: Child Care Plan*

Nova Scotia will be implementing the 10-Year Nova Scotia Child Care Plan. The province will contribute an additional $23.5 million to federal monies to ensure the sustainability of the Nova Scotia plan over the next decade. This will provide child care for more Nova Scotia families and will help support the child-care sector. Nova Scotia will continue to work with other provinces and the federal government to achieve the best results for Nova Scotia families. The plan will provide 1,000 additional licensed child-care spaces and 550 additional portable child-care spaces. The plan increases the availability of child care in rural areas, as well as the availability of spaces for infants and children with special needs. More equitable operating funding for non-profit and commercial centres and better information and services for parents are other features of the new plan. (Community Services)

#### *Priority: Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia*

In 2006–2007, the Senior Citizens' Secretariat will lead the implementation of the Strategy for Positive Aging, released in December 2005. More than a framework for government action, the strategy is a planning tool to be used by all levels of government and sectors of society in creating communities where seniors thrive.

This year the province will develop a positive aging action plan to outline its priorities for advancing the strategy and will launch an awareness campaign to encourage other sectors to do the same. (Senior Citizens' Secretariat)

### *Priority: Elder Abuse Awareness and Prevention Strategy*

The health and well-being of seniors will continue to be promoted through the province's efforts to prevent and address elder abuse. In 2006–2007, the government will begin a campaign to raise awareness of the issue—a key action identified in the Nova Scotia Elder Abuse Strategy: Towards Awareness and Prevention, which was released in November 2005.

Under the leadership of the Senior Citizens' Secretariat, educational materials will be developed and communities will be involved. June 15 will be proclaimed as the first-ever World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and second annual Nova Scotia Elder Abuse Awareness Day. (Senior Citizens' Secretariat)

### *Priority: Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV) Enforcement*

In 2006–2007, the OHV enforcement program will see the deployment of a dozen enforcement officers in rural areas across the province dedicated to OHV-related enforcement activities.

Officers will patrol parks, beaches, trails, wilderness areas, and woodlands, as recommended by the Voluntary Planning Off-highway Vehicle Task Force Report (2004) and government's subsequent action plan. The enforcement personnel have a mandate to enforce the new OHV Act as it pertains to land owners, trail users, and environmentally sensitive areas.

Other OHV activities for 2006–2007 include developing relevant regulations, establishing an advisory committee to the Minister, and developing a training program and guidelines for closed courses, as well as relevant permits and procedures. (Natural Resources, Health Promotion and Protection, Environment and Labour)

### *Priority: Consumer Protection*

In 2006–2007 and continuing over the next several years, consumer protection officers will be increasing the number of inspections of licencees granted under six statutes administered by Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. The first priority will be businesses holding consumers' funds in trust accounts, including those selling prepaid funeral and cemetery services, collection agencies, and payday lender activities. Additional consumer protection officers will be hired to increase inspections and investigations to protect the public. (Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

### *Priority: United Way 211 Call Centre*

The province will conduct a study in 2006–2007 on the feasibility of putting a United Way 211 call centre in place. The newest three-digit phone number, 211 is dedicated to bringing people and services together. The CRTC has provided this number to the United Way to help Canadians find information and referral

services on community, social, health, and government services. It significantly improves citizen access to services and ensures they are available equitably to everyone. 211 services are now in operation in 26 states in the US. Metro Toronto is the only Canadian 211 service in operation, although several other provinces are in the planning stages. (Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

### *Priority: Political Participation of Women*

Government will extend workshops on the participation of women in politics to more areas this year. The Advisory Council on the Status of Women will hold three additional campaign workshops to take place in rural areas. To date, the Advisory Council has held two annual non-partisan political campaign schools for women interested in increasing their participation in electoral politics. While these schools will continue to meet the needs of increasing numbers of women, the additional workshops will help those who have difficulty in travelling away from their home communities for extended periods. (Advisory Council on the Status of Women)

### *Priority: Culture Sector Development*

Already valued at $1.2 billion, Nova Scotia's culture sector has tremendous untapped potential to grow. Cultural activity in the form of festivals and events takes place all over the province, and just about every community is home to amateur and professional artists.

This year, the province is pleased to increase its investment in arts and culture with an additional $1.2 million in funding. This includes $850,000 to ensure the sustainability of the sector and to examine potential opportunities for growth, and $361,000 to increase operating funding for the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

The province will form an interdepartmental committee to support the growth of the culture sector. The committee will enhance government's partnership with the Nova Scotia Arts and Culture Partnership Council as it develops programming relevant to the sector and will identify new resources and better allocate existing resources to promote the development of the sector. (Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

### *Priority: Heritage Strategy*

Heritage is intrinsic to community sustainability through its contribution to identity, cultural diversity, social cohesion, and community participation. In 2005, Voluntary Planning conducted extensive public consultations to identify what Nova Scotians value in their heritage, including perceptions around museums, built heritage, and cultural landscapes and defining opportunities for heritage product development.

This year the province will continue the development of a province-wide heritage strategy in response to the recommendations resulting from the work of Voluntary Planning. (Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

### *Priority: African Nova Scotian Affairs Cape Breton*

In 2006–2007, the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs will open a satellite office in Cape Breton, including three permanent positions. The head office is in Halifax, but large segments of the African Nova Scotian population live outside that area. The need for regional offices has been identified to ensure that rural populations receive support. The Cape Breton office is expected to open by late summer 2006. (Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs)

### *Priority: Mi'kmawey Debert*

In 2006–2007, the Office of Aboriginal Affairs will continue to work with the Mi'kmaq and other provincial and federal partners to further the work of Mi'kmawey Debert. The aim of this initiative is to protect valuable and unique archaeological resources, while developing opportunities to share the history and culture of the Mi'kmaq. They have been working with the province and Government of Canada in recent years to protect the site and develop a cultural centre to showcase the history and culture of the Mi'kmaq people. (Office of Aboriginal Affairs)

### *Priority: Aboriginal and Treaty Rights Negotiation*

Together with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia and the federal government, the province will continue working towards signing a Framework Agreement. This is a commitment made in June 2002 to formalize the establishment of a negotiation process on matters related to Aboriginal rights, including Aboriginal title and treaty rights. The provincial and federal governments have approved the Framework Agreement, and the Mi'kmaq approval process is currently under way. (Office of Aboriginal Affairs)

### *Priority: First Ministers Meeting on Aboriginal Issues*

The Office of Aboriginal Affairs will lead the follow-up work associated with the 2005 First Ministers Meeting (FMM) on Aboriginal issues. The province will work with the federal government and the Mi'kmaq to close the gap between the quality of life experienced by the Mi'kmaq and other Nova Scotians.

The FMM on Aboriginal Issues was an historic turning point in Aboriginal-government relations, when all first ministers committed their governments to take action in support of closing the gap in social and economic outcomes in housing, health, education, and economic opportunity.

In 2006–2007, the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, in collaboration with other provincial government departments, will work locally with the Mi'kmaq and Canada, to identify and implement specific actions in support of the FMM commitments. (Office of Aboriginal Affairs, Intergovernmental Affairs, Health, Health Promotion and Protection, Education, Community Services, Office of Economic Development, Environment and Labour)

### *Priority: Integrating Newcomers to Our Communities*

Integrating immigrants into our communities is key to keeping them here. The first priority of the Office of Immigration is to retain the immigrants who choose to land and settle in Nova Scotia. In 2006–2007, the office will continue to provide funding to not-for-profit organizations, community groups, and public educational institutions to help immigrant children find their way at school and to help their parents learn to speak English or French and find meaningful employment so they can integrate and stay in our communities. (Office of Immigration)

### *Priority: Supporting Foster Families*

Nova Scotia's foster families provide a valuable service to children in need of placement. By providing a secure, stable family environment, foster parents help ensure that children and youth live in safe, nurturing environments that promote their mental, physical, emotional, and social development.

The foster care program recognizes the volunteer nature of the work that foster parents do. It helps them to manage the rising costs associated with their much-valued service to society.

In 2006–2007, the government will increase base rates by 5 per cent for the foster families who have opened their homes to about 1,200 foster children in Nova Scotia. That translates to $14.46 per day for children under 10, and $21.02 per day for children 10 and over. (Community Services)

### *Priority: Increasing Income Assistance Rates*

Government is raising personal allowance rates for individuals on income assistance and shelter rates for those clients who have difficulty covering their shelter costs. To help meet basic needs and increased costs for shelter, the rates will go up $10 per month for personal allowances, $15 per month for shelter for singles, and $20 per month for households. (Community Services)

### *Priority: Additional Help for Employed Income Assistance Clients*

Finding and maintaining employment is the hope of all income assistance recipients

who are able to work. For some, this movement into the workforce often starts with part-time or seasonal employment. Currently, when income tax refunds are received, the full amount is used to reduce any entitlements. This can be a disincentive to continue working.

In 2006–2007, government will amend current income assistance regulations to allow clients who receive an income tax refund to keep 30 per cent of the refund as a further incentive to maintain employment. (Community Services)

### *Priority: Affordable Housing*

The province has fully committed $37.3 million in funding under the Federal/Provincial Phase 1 Affordable Housing Agreement. This funding was used to create or rehabilitate approximately 900 housing units for Nova Scotians. Funding under Phase 2 of the Agreement will begin in 2006–2007. (Community Services)

### *Priority: Housing Emergency Repair Programs*

In addition to helping people access affordable housing, government is also helping low-income Nova Scotians get needed home repairs and seniors adapt their homes for independent living.

An additional $3.4 million is being invested in housing emergency repair programs to maintain waiting lists at the current level while providing for the increased cost of repairs associated with these popular programs. Despite the oldest housing stock in the country, low-income Nova Scotians will not have to live in substandard housing in need of repairs that they cannot afford. (Community Services)

## Health Promotion and Protection

### *Priority: Pharmacare for Children in Low-Income Families*

In 2006–2007 government will implement a Low-Income Pharmacare program for children. This new program will extend to low-income working families prescription drug coverage currently available to children of income assistance families.

About 33,000 children under 18 years of age will benefit from the new program. It ensures that more low-income families will have access to drug coverage for their children, and it will help to reduce the number of emergency room visits for needed medications in non-emergency situations. The program will help income assistance families enter and stay in the workforce, knowing that drug costs for their children will be covered. (Community Services)

## Community Safety

While recent surveys show that most Nova Scotians feel safe in their homes, neighbourhoods, and communities, there is heightened awareness and a sense of

unease given reported increases in rates of violent crime and violent victimization.

Between 1999 and 2004, Nova Scotia experienced a 4 per cent increase in the overall crime rate. During the same period, the province saw a 12 per cent increase in the rate of youth charged with a violent crime and a 43 per cent increase in the rate of youth charged with causing bodily harm.

The reality is that only a small percentage of offenders are responsible for a large volume of crime.

In 2006–2007, the government of Nova Scotia is undertaking a number of initiatives with justice partners to strengthen enforcement and improve public safety. This includes working to reduce the incidence of crime perpetrated by youth and other members of society. Government will also invest in measures to improve emergency management co-ordination and preparation in 2006–2007.

### *Priority: Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)*

Nova Scotia continues to call for action to enhance public safety by amending the Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA), to allow detention and custodial sentences for young people who pose a danger to the public. The Department of Justice has argued that the YCJA does not offer effective measures to deter a small percentage of youth whose behaviour is out of control and jeopardizes public safety. (Justice)

### *Priority: Youth Attendance Centre*

The Department of Justice is proposing to establish a non-residential attendance centre in the Halifax area for youth in conflict with the law. These centres have been shown to be successful in holding high-risk youth accountable through a range of programs and services such as education, job search, and treatment for behavioural problems. (Justice)

### *Priority: Nunn Commission*

The Department of Justice will lead government's response to recommendations arising from the Nunn Commission, which is undertaking a public enquiry into the release of a youth who was later charged and convicted in the death of Halifax resident Theresa McEvoy. (Justice)

### *Priority: Children under 12 in Conflict with the Law*

Government is considering investments that help prevent children from engaging in criminal activity and to provide them with hope and opportunity. The Department of Justice is exploring the possibility of a Restorative Justice Program for Children under 12 in Conflict with the Law. Partners will be brought together to determine the needs of young children who cause harm and to understand the capacity of communities to sustain an under-12 program. (Justice)

### *Priority: Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act*

Government will be reintroducing the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, which will empower Nova Scotians to seek community safety orders to shut down criminal activities such as the illegal sale of drugs and alcohol, prostitution, and illegal gaming that adversely affect their neighbourhoods. A new Public Safety Investigative Unit will address complaints through a civil enforcement process. (Justice)

### *Priority: Criminal Intelligence Service (CIS)*

To build safer, stronger communities, we need to respond to crime and the conditions that create crime. Government is working in close co-operation with our partners through a $6-million investment over four years to improve on-the-ground intelligence in the fight against crime. The Criminal Intelligence Service (CIS) focuses on marijuana grow operations, the illegal use of prescription drugs, smash-and-grab tobacco rings, the sale of illegal drugs, electronic fraud, murders linked to biker gangs, and border security. CIS expands policing resources for collection, analysis, and dissemination of criminal intelligence in regional offices across the province, which is critical to combat organized and major crime and to heighten awareness of potential terrorism issues. (Justice)

### *Priority: Additional Police Officers and Aboriginal Policing*

Two officers will be hired into the Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System Unit, which maintains a database of major and potential serial violent offenders. The database is a critical investigative tool for police to address violent offences and to identify links among violent offences in the province. This increases the likelihood of capturing serial offenders.

Another officer will be hired into the Technological Crime Unit, which addresses Internet/technology-based crimes such as child pornography and Internet fraud.

Additional RCMP officers and support staff will be hired to address the law enforcement needs of aboriginal communities in three First Nations communities in the province. (Justice)

### *Priority: Monitoring People on House Arrest*

As of May 2006, Nova Scotia began an electronic supervision pilot project for offenders under house arrest in the Halifax Regional Municipality. The project is able to track offenders 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to ensure that they are living up to their court-ordered obligations. Nova Scotia is the first jurisdiction in the country to use global positioning system (GPS) satellite technology to monitor offenders under conditional sentences.

In 2006–2007, more resources are also being provided for improved monitoring of bail house-arrest compliance. (Justice)

### *Priority: Business Continuity Planning*

Recent extreme weather events, both here and in other parts of the world, as well as widespread acts of terrorism and new strains of influenza have highlighted the necessity for comprehensive emergency management coordination. A secure community enjoys the sense that people are prepared and will work together whatever happens.

The Emergency Management Office (EMO) is leading the development of provincial government departmental plans to ensure continuity of services should the consequences of a major emergency damage government facilities or otherwise prevent civil servants from performing duties critical to Nova Scotians. (EMO)

### *Priority: 911*

Every community in Nova Scotia will benefit from the renewal of the province's 911 technology. Nova Scotia's 911 call-taking technology has operated 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for the past four years. A major upgrade to the system will begin in 2006–2007 to accommodate changes in information technology and the 911 telecommunications world, in areas such as voice-over-Internet protocols (VOIP) and cellular location technology. (EMO)

### *Priority: Joint Operations, E-Team, and Emergency Response Capability*

When an emergency occurs, the Joint Emergency Operations Centre (JEOC) becomes EMO's operations centre, and it needs a significant upgrade. In 2006–2007, the provincial and federal government will share the cost of the $100,000 upgrade needed to continue to respond adequately to emergency conditions. The result will be improved coordination of emergency response. (EMO)

### *Priority: Training Infrastructure*

Operating a full-time training centre is a key component of EMO's multi-year training strategy. The facility will attract students from government and the private sector to enable integrated training opportunities with federal, provincial, and municipal partners.

Nova Scotia families and communities will benefit from having more municipal and provincial government staff trained in emergency management.

EMO trained 250 people in 2004–2005 and 1,000 people in 2005–2006, and expects further significant increases in demand for training. (EMO)

### *Priority: Training Delivery*

EMO will help Nova Scotians avoid preventable emergencies and recover quickly when they happen, through an increase in training and awareness programs. In particular, EMO will prioritize the development of an awareness package for vulnerable persons, including seniors. Delivery of this training will be achieved, in part, through increased use of volunteers. (EMO)

# *Families and Communities — Measuring Our Performance*

## *Measure:* Income Assistance Recipients Securing Employment

***Outcome:*** Strong families; children reaching their potential (Community Services)

This measure indicates the percentage of individuals receiving income assistance and eligible to participate in employment support programs who have secured full- or part-time work.

### Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2004–2005, 28 per cent of income assistance recipients involved in employment support services secured full- or part-time employment. This was an increase of 3 per cent from the 2003–2004 rate of 25 per cent. The target is to maintain the percentage at or above the 2003–2004 base year rate.

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## *Measure:* Overall Crime Rate (Justice)

***Outcome:*** Safe communities

This measure indicates how many criminal incidents have been reported to the police for violent, property, drug, and other offences, excluding Criminal Code traffic offences. The number is standardized per 100,000 of the population so the rates can be compared across communities.

### Performance Highlights and Targets

Statistics show that Nova Scotia's overall crime rate increased 4 per cent between 1999 and 2004. Nova Scotia's crime rate for violent and other criminal code offences is above the national average, while property crime rates are below national averages. Our target for the future is to maintain the crime rate below the national average through particular attention to youth crime, including advocating changes to the Youth Criminal Justice Act, strengthening enforcement, improving offender supervision and support, and making additional investments in crime prevention.

**Overall Crime Rate (Criminal incidents per 100,000 population—1998–2004)**

| | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nova Scotia | 7624 | 7671 | 7738 | 8614 | 8764 |
| Canada | 7666 | 7655 | 7706 | 8146 | 8051 |

# 2. Health and Health Care

The overall health and wellness of individuals is fundamental to the government's vision of a stronger, safer, healthier Nova Scotia.

That is why in 2006–2007, the government of Nova Scotia will continue to implement its health strategy, Your Health Matters, and why the government will continue to increase its investment in Nova Scotians' health. The total investment in health care and health promotion and protection will rise to $2.8 billion in 2006–2007, an increase of $217.1 million over 2005–2006.

The strategic areas of focus this year are in line with Your Health Matters. We will help people stay healthy. We will train, recruit, and keep more doctors, nurses, and health professionals. We will shorten wait lists for tests, treatments, and care. We will improve care for our seniors. And we will expand access to health services closer to home.

In 2006–2007, the Department of Health and the new Department of Health Promotion and Protection will also work closely to implement a strengthened public health system.

## *Health and Health Care Priorities 2006–2007*

### Health Promotion and Protection

#### *Priority: Public Health Review Implementation*

In February 2006, Premier Rodney MacDonald announced the creation of the Department of Health Promotion and Protection.

The new department brings together Nova Scotia Health Promotion, the Public Health branch of the Department of Health, and the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health. By bringing together experts in promotion, prevention, and protection, government is taking the next step forward in creating a healthier and safer Nova Scotia.

In 2006–2007, the government begins the multi-year undertaking of putting the new department into full operation. The parallel and much-larger task will be leading the way to public health system renewal, which will contribute to the health and well-being of all Nova Scotians.

The impetus for the creation of the new department was the public health review entitled The Renewal of Public Health in Nova Scotia: Building a Public Health System to Meet the Needs of Nova Scotians, received by Cabinet in January 2006.

Components of the new system will include

- public health workforce development
- infrastructure development for public health laboratories
- information systems and organizations structures.

Formation of the department signals the government's commitment to an integrated public health system that can sharpen the focus on protecting citizens in a public health emergency, while continuing to promote health and reduce injury.

Current trends point to the wisdom of focusing on better emergency planning, health and safety, and support for Nova Scotians as they work to achieve healthier lifestyles.

Better emergency planning can help keep our institutions up and running and our communities safe and viable in times of natural disaster, epidemic, or other external threat. Better health practices among children, such as physical activity and good nutrition, are recognized contributors to the development of positive behaviour, school performance, and overall cognitive development.

More than 50 per cent of Nova Scotians are not active enough to enjoy a health benefit, and physical inactivity costs the provincial health system many millions of dollars in hospital, physician, and drug services.

Drug expenditure is the fastest-growing category of health spending in Canada. It makes up the second-largest proportion of health expenditures and Nova Scotia is no exception. (Health Promotion and Protection)

### *Priority: Tobacco Control Strategy Renewal*

Tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable illness and death and costs the system $168 million a year in direct health costs.

One of the most successful of Nova Scotia's health promotion strategies, the Tobacco Control Strategy, will be renewed this year.

By 2004, the strategy had brought the smoking rate down to the national level of 20 per cent from 30 per cent in 2000, when Nova Scotia's rate was the highest in the country. (Health Promotion and Protection)

### *Priority: Smoke-Free Places Act*

On December 1, 2006, the province will implement the strongest legislation in Canada to protect its citizens from second-hand tobacco smoke. Amendments to the Smoke-free Places Act will ensure that all workplaces are smoke free and will no longer permit smoking on licensed outdoor patios. (Health Promotion and Protection)

### *Priority: Nova Scotia's Smokers Helpline*

A key component of Nova Scotia's Tobacco Strategy is the Canadian Cancer Society's Smokers Helpline, a service that offers tobacco users, friends, and family toll-free information on how to find community-based programs that can help them quit or reduce tobacco use.

As of April 1, 2006, the province assumed responsibility for the costs associated with call-volume charges.

The Department of Health Promotion and Protection will also provide financial support through the district health authorities for nicotine treatment services to help people stop smoking and for community-based prevention programs. (Health Promotion and Protection)

### *Priority: Walking Initiative*

Nova Scotia remains committed to the goal set by the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Sport, Recreation and Fitness, to increase the number of Canadians active enough for health benefits by 10 per cent by 2010.

Walking is the favourite leisure time physical activity reported by Nova Scotians and by Canadians in general. The Department of Health Promotion and Protection will develop a provincial walking initiative in conjunction with the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Nova Scotia. The initiative will offer information, resource materials, pedometer access, and recognition programs for individuals, schools, workplaces, and communities. (Health Promotion and Protection)

### *Priority: Trail Maintenance Program*

Given the high priority that Nova Scotians attach to walking, the Department of Health Promotion and Protection will introduce a trail-maintenance program in 2006–2007 that will help Nova Scotians do more of this favourite activity. The funding will help community trail groups and municipalities maintain their trail systems. The department will also continue to develop a Nova Scotia trails database. (Health Promotion and Protection)

### *Priority: Dartmouth Harbourwalk Trail*

Waterfront Development Corporation Limited (WDCL) is working in partnership with Halifax Regional Municipality, Dartmouth Trails Association, and the Shubenacadie Canal Commission to develop a unique harbourside public use trail, stretching 3.8 km between the Woodside and Alderney Landing ferry terminals. The total cost of the trail is approximately $1.5 million, cost-shared among the partners. When complete, the trail will link with the Trans Canada and Shubenacadie Canal trail systems. (Waterfront Development Corporation)

### *Priority: Nova Scotia Sport Plan*

In 2006–2007, the Nova Scotia Sport Plan will be finalized, and an implementation plan will be developed to improve the quality of life for individuals and communities in Nova Scotia through active participation in sport.

Sport is widely accepted as a powerful contributor to social and personal development. Studies have shown that an increased level of sport participation offers many benefits over and above personal satisfaction and a sense of physical and emotional well-being. An increase in sport activity can result in better marks at school, a decrease in tobacco use, reduced crime rates, and reduced use of illicit drugs. As a way to be physically active, sport contributes to the adoption of a healthy lifestyle and prevention of disease and illness.

As part of the Sport Plan, the Department of Health Promotion and Protection will lead the multi-year planning process for hosting the 2011 Canada Winter Games and provide support to the bid to host the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Halifax Regional Municipality. Other priorities of the plan include helping communities plan for improving recreational infrastructure, promoting national-status athletes and teams from Nova Scotia, and collaborating with the Aboriginal community to improve health outcomes through physical activity, sport, and recreation in the Aboriginal population. (Health Promotion and Protection)

### *Priority: Health-Promoting Schools*

The Department of Health Promotion and Protection will continue to provide sustainable program funding for partnerships with school boards and district health authorities to continue the Health-Promoting Schools program. This program supports schools throughout the province in providing healthy eating and physical activity opportunities for their students.

Research has shown that a hungry child has difficulty learning and that, over time, poor nutrition reduces a child's resistance to infection. (Health Promotion and Protection)

### *Priority: Community Volunteers*

Throughout the year, the Department of Health Promotion and Protection will work with its partners in the various regions of the province to find ways to build more volunteer resources in the physical activity, sport, and recreation sector. When there is an energized volunteer sector working and sharing resources with government departments, the community becomes a healthier place in which to live. (Health Promotion and Protection)

## Health-Care Services

### *Priority: Emergency Preparedness*

The Department of Health is developing plans for a comprehensive health sector emergency preparedness response. Plans will focus on an "all-hazards" approach to address threats of a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, explosive, and terrorist nature. The department's planning spans the health sector and integrates with plans in health service delivery organizations such as district health authorities, long-term care facilities, the provincial Emergency Management Office (EMO), Health Canada, and provincial government departments. (Health)

### *Priority: Wait Times*

During 2006–2007, the Department of Health will collect wait-time data on a voluntary basis for consultations with specialists. Work will continue with the district health authorities and the IWK Health Centre to define, gather, and report wait-time information for diagnostic and surgical services. New systems, such as operating room, emergency department, and knowledge management systems, will all be investigated as options in support of the wait-times monitoring project.

The Nova Scotia Wait Times website will continue to expand, providing Nova Scotians with information on more tests, treatments, and services to help them decide if they would like to travel outside their communities to a location where a wait time is shorter.

Work will continue on the Ten Year Plan to strengthen health care agreed to by federal, provincial, and territorial health ministers. Nova Scotia is committed to establishing multi-year targets to achieve priority benchmarks by December 31, 2007. (Health)

### *Priority: Training More Health-Care Staff*

The Department of Health's role in physician recruitment is to support district health authorities with the tools they need to recruit the physicians their areas need.

Nova Scotia is continuing to build a solid plan for health human resources that will support the health system's current and future needs. The immediate priorities include encouraging young people to choose health-related careers, training tomorrow's health professionals in ways that meet the community's health needs today, and accurately forecasting what those needs will be in the future.

Government continues to increase undergraduate medical training seats at Dalhousie Medical School by eight. By 2007–2008, Dalhousie will have a total of 90 undergraduate medical seats. These 90 seats will be funded each year through the Department of Health.

To reduce wait times and see more family practice physicians working throughout Nova Scotia, the Department of Health will expand the assessment and integration of internationally educated health professionals. Regulatory barriers and inadequate assessment and educational opportunities have contributed to a significant pool of these professionals, who are either underemployed in their chosen profession or unable to work in their profession in Atlantic Canada.

The Nursing Strategy continues to provide funds to expand nursing seats at St. Francis Xavier and Cape Breton universities and in the nurse practitioner program at Dalhousie University. Priorities of the Nursing Strategy include rural nursing, relocation allowances, and continuing education.

Funding for the training of 25 medical laboratory technologists will continue in 2006–2007. This is part of the joint program offered by the community colleges in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to train medical lab technologists for Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia offers the students bursaries of $4,000 in each year of the two-year program, in exchange for the students coming back to work in the Nova Scotia health-care system for two years when they graduate. (Health)

### *Priority: Primary Health Care Renewal*

Nova Scotia will continue its commitment to strengthen community-based care. The province will continue the investment begun by Health Canada through the former Primary Care Transition Fund, by sustaining an infrastructure in the district health authorities for public health care renewal. A provincial investment of $2.2 million past the end date of the federal transition fund will allow the district health authorities to continue their work on renewal.

All the district health authorities have identified a need for expanded teams in primary health care, including nurse practitioners. Evidence suggests that collaborative teams are better able to deal with the increasing complexity of care, increase the focus on health promotion and disease prevention, and do it all cost-effectively. Each district health authority will implement new models of care delivery that meet the needs of their populations and give residents reasonable access to multidisciplinary teams.

In addition to a team approach to health and health-care delivery, primary health care renewal includes prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of common illness or injury, support for emotional and mental health, ongoing management of chronic conditions, advice on self-care, healthy environments and communities, and coordination of access to other services and providers. (Health)

### *Priority: Mental Health Standards*

In 2006–2007, the Department of Health will continue to develop regulations and standards for the new mental health act, the Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act, approved in the fall of 2005. Funding for implementation of the standards will assist in the areas of greatest care needs, including the Youth at Risk Project and patients rights' advisors. Advisors will ensure that patients affected by the legislation in all district health authorities will be informed of their rights and due process. (Health)

### *Priority: MRI Access*

Operating funds of $3 million in 2006–2007 will support new magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanners at four sites in the southwest and northern parts of the province: New Glasgow, Antigonish, Kentville, and Yarmouth. MRI scanners are used to detect and diagnose soft-tissue tumours and diseases of the brain, spinal cord, cardiac, blood-vessel, and musculoskeletal systems. (Health)

### *Priority: Continuing Care*

The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to supporting Nova Scotians in their homes and communities. A provincial continuing care strategy will direct the work of the continuing care branch for the next 10 years. This work will enhance existing services and expand new services that will help Nova Scotians maintain their health and independence, and improve their access to care and support.

In 2006-2007, government will invest $12.6 million in initiatives designed, among other things, to reduce wait lists for nursing homes and home care, expand the type of home care services available, and increase the number of restorative and long-term care beds.

The government has committed an additional $3.8 million in this fiscal year to introduce a number of new initiatives as part of the roll out of the continuing care strategy. This includes the provincial expansion of a palliative care program that has been piloted in the Northern Region, improved respite care services, the expansion of the home oxygen program to include mobile oxygen units, and the introduction of home care services in schools and other facilities.

A high-quality, client-centered, accessible and affordable continuing care system will:

- acknowledge the role of individuals and families in achieving maximum health and independence
- support local initiatives that help individuals remain in their homes and communities as long as possible
- ensure care givers and health providers are well supported
- offer a range of services to children, youth, adults and seniors

- provide long-term care when and where it is needed. (Health)

### *Priority: Health Information Management*

The Department of Health will be moving ahead in support of information management initiatives that speed up the development of electronic health information systems to improve access to health-related services for patients, families, and health-care professionals.

The following are a sampling of some of the initiatives to be continued in 2006–2007:

- identify opportunities to develop a provider registry among the four Atlantic provinces
- continue to participate in the Canadian public health surveillance projects that are to be implemented by all Canadian jurisdictions over the next several years
- complete the Nova Scotia Picture Archiving and Communications System project, a high-speed, graphical computer system that stores and retrieves diagnostic images province-wide
- install new endpoints to expand the clinical capacity and use of the Nova Scotia Telehealth Network, a videoconferencing network that connects health-care facilities throughout the province to improve people's access to health-care professionals. (Health)

## Families and Communities

### *Priority: Healthy Eating Nova Scotia Strategy*

Government released its healthy eating strategy in March 2005. Since that time, the Department of Health Promotion and Protection has provided a variety of funding opportunities to groups and communities doing work in line with the strategy.

Funding has gone to each district health authority to hire an additional public health nutritionist to support implementation of all four of the strategy's priority areas.

The priorities are breastfeeding, children and youth, fruits and vegetables, and food security. In addition to the DHAs, community partners include child-care centres, family resource centres, and school boards. (Health Promotion and Protection)

### *Priority: Breastfeeding*

Nova Scotia has become the second province in Canada to adopt a provincial breastfeeding policy to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding in hospitals and the community. Breastfeeding is the natural way to feed a baby, and it provides benefits to mothers, infants, the community, and the health-care system.

The Department of Health Promotion and Protection will continue to partner with hospitals, public health services, family resource centres, and others to implement the Baby Friendly Initiative in Nova Scotia. (Health Promotion and Protection)

### *Priority: Securing Healthy Food*

As part of the provincial healthy eating strategy, the Department of Health Promotion and Protection has committed to the work that supports all Nova Scotians having regular, affordable access to healthy food. As part of this work, the department will provide funding to support the sustainable food-costing model. This will help determine, on an ongoing basis, the cost of eating a nutritious diet in Nova Scotia. (Health Promotion and Protection)

### *Priority: Youth Health Centres*

Approximately 37 youth health centres operate throughout the province, providing a broad range of services, information, and referrals, as well as some clinical services. Most are located in schools, and all deliver their services in a confidential, non-judgmental manner.

The Department of Health Promotion and Protection will supplement existing funding sources in 2006–2007 to sustain these centres and extend their impact.

As part of its commitment to children and youth, the department also continues its work as a partner on the Nova Scotia Roundtable on Youth Sexual Health. The work of the roundtable focuses on promoting youth sexual health, including efforts to reduce teen pregnancy and rates of sexually transmitted infection. (Health Promotion and Protection)

### *Priority: Community Health Board Wellness Grants*

In conjunction with district health authorities, community health boards will continue to receive Community Health Board Wellness Grants for local projects aimed at preventing chronic disease. (Health Promotion and Protection)

### *Priority: Children's Immunization*

Government will continue to implement the expanded childhood immunization schedule consistent with the National Immunization Strategy. (Health Promotion and Protection)

## Community Safety

### *Priority: Injury Prevention in the District Health Authorities*

Government will establish a grant to enable the development and implementation of an injury-prevention strategy based in district health authorities. Local leadership will ensure that injury prevention programs and resources are integrated at all levels of the community. (Health Promotion and Protection)

### *Priority: Preventing Alcohol and Risk Related Trauma in Youth (PARTY)*

Injury is the leading cause of death and disability for Nova Scotia's teens. In 2005–2006, Health Promotion and Protection launched the Prevent Alcohol and Risk Related Trauma in Youth program, also known as PARTY. This is an evidence-based resource designed to educate teenagers between the ages of 15 and 16 of the consequences of risk and serious injury.

Partnering with Emergency Health Services, the departments of Education and Transportation and Public Works, and Dalhousie University, the PARTY program will expand in 2006–2007. Planned activities include continued training of program facilitators, development of curriculum supplements, and research and evaluation. The department's goal is to deliver PARTY to all 15,000 grade 10 students in the province. (Health Promotion and Protection)

### *Priority: Injury Prevention Strategy*

In the population as a whole, the leading causes of injury-related hospitalizations and deaths are transportation-related injuries, falls by seniors, and suicide. These are the three target areas of the Nova Scotia Injury Prevention Strategy.

In 2006–2007, Health Promotion and Protection will continue funding and support of the partnership with Community Links for the Preventing Falls Together initiative.

The department will also continue to work with Transportation and Public Works to craft a road-safety campaign and will continue a partnership with the IWK Child Safety Link's Car Seat Safety initiative.

The department will partner with the Canadian Mental Health Association to develop community-based suicide prevention initiatives and establish regional suicide prevention coalitions. (Health Promotion and Protection, Transportation and Public Works)

### *Priority: Alcohol Strategy*

Coordinating the development of the provincial alcohol strategy and preparing it for launch will continue to be one of the Department of Health Promotion and Protection's major efforts in 2006–2007. As well, the department will develop, test, and release education materials during the year to support less-harmful drinking, reduce social and economic costs, and improve productivity. According to 2002 data, alcohol-related harm among Nova Scotians costs more than $419 million annually. (Health Promotion and Protection)

### *Priority: Problem Gambling*

In 2006–2007, the Department of Health Promotion and Prevention will continue to implement seven initiatives from another major departmental initiative, the Gaming Strategy, released by government in April 2005. Work will include providing resources to district health authorities to fill gaps in prevention, early intervention and treatment of problem gamblers and their families, delivering education programs to both youth and seniors, and setting up a community-based prevention program. (Health Promotion and Prevention)

### *Priority: Socioeconomic Study on Gaming*

In 2006–2007 government is conducting the first quantitative study to track the social and economic aspects of gaming activity in the province. The study will look at the industry's effects on those working in or supplying business services to the casinos and gaming industry in both Halifax and Sydney. The results will help measure our progress toward a better balance between the social and economic effects of gambling. (Environment and Labour)

### *Priority: Renewal of 911 Technology*

A key link in the delivery of health services in Nova Scotia is the province-wide 911 emergency telephone service. The existing 911 technology has operated 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for the past four years. A major upgrade to the system will be completed in 2006–2007, to accommodate changes in information technology and the 911 telecommunications world in areas such as voice-over-Internet protocols (VOIP) and cellular location technology. (EMO)

### *Priority: Business Continuity Planning*

One of the effects of a possible flu pandemic will likely be a serious disruption in the business of government. EMO will lead the development of provincial government departmental plans to ensure continuity of services should the consequences of a flu pandemic prevent government from performing duties that are a necessity for Nova Scotians. EMO has taken preliminary steps to develop a province-wide strategy. (EMO)

## Economic Development and Infrastructure

### *Priority: Comprehensive Workplace Health*

The Department of Health Promotion and Protection will lead the development of a workplace health strategy. The workplace is identified as one of the key settings for consideration by the provincial Chronic Disease Prevention Strategy. The workplace plan will build on the experience gained from successful school health initiatives, as well as from HealthWorks, a national strategy for comprehensive workplace health. (Health Promotion and Protection)

# *Health and Health Care — Measuring Our Performance*

## *Measure:* Percentage of Youth Aged 15-19 Who Smoke (Health Promotion and Protection)

***Outcome:*** Healthier Lifestyles

Smoking is the number one cause of preventable death and disability. High rates of smoking translate into high rates of diseases, including lung cancer, emphysema and heart/respiratory disease later in life.

### Performance Highlights and Targets

The 2004 Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey reports that 20 per cent of Nova Scotia youth aged 15 to 19 smoked, compared to 25 per cent in 2000. In Canada, the smoking rate in youth declined from 25 per cent to 18 per cent over the same period. Nova Scotia aims to continue decreasing the rate of smoking among Nova Scotia youth to the national rate or below, by 2009-2010.

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## *Measure:* Percentage of Youth and Children Active Enough for Health Benefits (Health Promotion and Protection)

***Outcome:*** Healthier Lifestyles

Regular physical activity for young people provides important health benefits. Inactive children are more likely to become inactive and unhealthy adults. Physical inactivity is measured by calculating the percentage of students in grades 3, 7 and 11 who accumulated at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity on at least five days of the week.

### Performance Highlights and Targets

In 2001, the percentage of children and youth who accumulated at least 60 minutes of moderate or greater physical activity during five days of the week was as follows:
grade 3: 90 per cent of boys and 92 per cent of girls
grade 7: 62 per cent of boys and 44 per cent of girls
grade 11: 12 per cent of boys and 7 per cent of girls

A repeat of this study is planned every four years. Results of the second assessment will not be available until fall 2006.

Nova Scotia's goal is to maintain the grade 3 activity levels and raise the grade 7 and 11 levels by 10 percentage points by 2009-2019.

### *Measure:* Percentage of Adults Reporting Physical Activity That Provides Health Benefits (Health Promotion and Protection)

***Outcome:*** Healthier Lifestyles

Regular physical activity provides important health benefits for adults, while inactivity is a major risk factor for heart disease and depression for this age group.

## Performance Highlights and Targets

Physical activity is an important contributor to physical and mental health. Inactivity is a driving force behind the high rates of chronic disease in Nova Scotia.

Self-reported data from the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) is collected every two years, which identifies adults who are active (30 minutes of activity per day) and moderately active (15-29 minutes per day) and who obtain associated health benefits.

According to the 2003 CCHS survey, 45 per cent of Nova Scotian adults 20 years and older reported being active or moderately active. This compares to a national rate of 49 per cent. Our goal is to increase the number of Nova Scotians active enough for health benefits by 10 percentage points, to 55 per cent by 2009-2010.

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### *Measure:* Percentage of Family Physician Positions Filled in Under-Served Areas (Health)

***Outcome:*** Access to quality health care

This is a measure of the supply and distribution of family physician positions filled in under-served areas.

## Performance Highlights and Targets

The total number of family physicians in under-served areas changes rapidly because of natural fluctuations (deaths, retirements and relocations) and successful recruitment. There are fewer positions identified as being in under-served areas: 37 positions in 22 communities as compared to 42 identified in prior years. Eighty-two per cent of vacancies in these positions were filled during 2004-2005.

Ongoing recruitment efforts are required to maintain or exceed the provincial target (80 per cent). Nova Scotia is focusing on building multi-professional care teams, which includes increasing the number of primary health care nurse practitioner positions to 28 from the current 18.

# 3. Education

Education and skills development are important tools in helping our youth prepare for the future and all our citizens adapt to new opportunities resulting from changing circumstances.

In 2006–2007, the Government of Nova Scotia will work closely with other departments and with school boards, higher education institutions, businesses, and communities to achieve lifelong learning success for Nova Scotians.

Many of the initiatives that will be undertaken continue with the implementation of the four-year strategic direction outlined in Learning for Life II: Brighter Futures Together. This is our plan to help more of our students from primary to grade 12 succeed in school and in life.

We will continue our work to cap class sizes, improve mathematics and literacy strategies, help parents and communities contribute more to student education and training, and enhance or replace educational facilities.

At the same time, we will continue to invest in adult learning and literacy strategies, career-development initiatives, and alternatives for those who are not succeeding at the academic level. These programs are designed to address today's labour market, which is facing the combined challenges of declining population growth, changing technology, and rising educational and skill requirements.

## *Education Priorities 2006–2007*

### Families and Communities

#### *Priority: Reducing Class Sizes*

Government will expand the Class Size initiative from grades primary, 1, and 2 classes to cap grade 3 classes at 25 students, as of September 2006. In addition, combined grades 1–2 and 2–3 classes will have a maximum of 20 students, or an additional non-teaching adult will be placed in the class. (Education)

#### *Priority: Pre-primary Program*

The Department of Education will continue to coordinate the pre-primary pilot program in up to 20 sites across the province this year and evaluate the program at the close of the 2006–2007 school year. The program is designed to help four-year-olds so they are more ready to learn by the time they enter school. (Education)

### *Priority: Higher Standards for Learning and Teaching*

As part of government's goal to help every student reach their full potential, the Department of Education will enter year two of the plan for school-improvement accreditation. This process engages schools in an extensive review of their student achievement and school performance. In the first year of implementation, 49 schools began the process. Sixty more schools will begin in 2006–2007. Accreditation means that a school meets a standard level of quality and that educational goals are being met.

To support enrichment opportunities for students, government will support expansion of artists-in-schools programs as well as individual and school leadership programs. The Department of Education will also provide funding for the expansion of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program in 2006–2007. That will help school boards prepare for the implementation of IB grade 11 courses in 2007–2008. (Education)

### *Priority: Professional Services for Students with Special Needs*

In 2006–2007, the Department of Education will continue its multi-year commitment to increase funding for school boards for core professional services for students with special needs. Funding will allow for more speech pathologists, psychologists, resource teachers, and, starting this year, more qualified guidance counselors in our schools. The strategy to increase these services is in response to the report from the Special Education Implementation Review Committee and input from principals across the province. (Education)

### *Priority: Accountability Reports*

A newly expanded Minister's Report to Parents will be released in 2006–2007. The report outlines recent student assessment results, particularly the grade 6 literacy assessment. The report will include, for the first time, results of the Mathematics 12 and Advanced Mathematics 12 student assessments. In addition, each school board will report on successes with public school programs and services initiatives. (Education)

### *Priority: Mathematics and Literacy Resources*

More learning resource materials will be provided for students in both math and literacy in 2006–2007. Students will also benefit from the addition of more mentors for teachers and for the students, and from more professional development training for teachers in these subject areas. (Education)

### *Priority: Language Education*

Government will continue French, Mi'kmaq, and Gaelic language training in 2006–2007. The Department of Education will implement a plan to increase the retention rate of students in Early French Immersion programs at the elementary level. The Department will continue to promote an alternative delivery of Core French in grade 6, by increasing the number of schools offering Français intensif. Ways will also be sought to increase enrolment in Core French at the senior high level.

Nova Scotia's junior high school students are required to study a second language. In addition to French, school boards have the option of offering both Gaelic and Mi'kmaq. In 2006–2007, support will be provided for Mi'kmaq Language 7, and a draft curriculum will be completed during the year for Mi'kmaq Language 8. Development of Gaelic 11 and 12 will be completed, for implementation in 2007 and 2008, respectively. (Education)

### *Priority: Options and Opportunities for Student Success*

The Department of Education will fund the expansion of projects under the program known as O2: Options and Opportunities for Student Success. This program provides options to students who are not succeeding or not engaged by the high school program, so that they will be able to establish a career plan, complete high school, and find meaningful work or continue on to post-secondary education.

In 2006–2007, the department will help school boards plan and establish a Career Academy in a number of high schools. Help will also be available to school boards to expand co-operative education and other work-placement programs through links to the community college and industry. The department will work with the Nova Scotia Community College and Université Sainte-Anne to establish the framework governing guaranteed admission or advanced standing in programs for O2 graduates.

The O2 program not only helps individual students succeed, but also positively affects their families and communities in the process. (Education)

### *Priority: BLAC Report*

To increase educational opportunities for African Nova Scotian learners, the department will continue implementation of the Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC) Report: Redressing Inequity—Empowering Black Learners. Government will continue its work with school boards to provide more support for struggling African Nova Scotian students to improve their academic achievement and graduation rates. English 12: African Heritage will be developed as an eligible credit for language arts graduation requirements. The Council of African Canadian Educators will continue to be consulted on the continuing implementation of the BLAC Report. (Education)

### *Priority: Racial Equity Policy*

The Department of Education will support implementation of the Racial Equity Policy in elementary schools across the province, while at the junior high and middle school levels, efforts will continue to focus on professional development for department staff and teachers. The next phase of implementation in the system will focus on in-service education in senior high schools. (Education)

### *Priority: Assessment Programs*

The Language Literacy Assessment program will be expanded in 2006–2007 from the current Elementary Literacy Assessment administered in grade 6, to a Junior High Literacy Assessment in grade 9. Each assessment will yield individual student results for parents, and the results will be used by schools to help students identified by the assessment as struggling with reading or writing.

Implementation will begin of new mathematics classroom assessment resources for grades primary to 3. This is a multi-year initiative of the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training. These resources will help teachers determine students' mathematical needs and offer support for those who are having difficulties. (Education)

### *Priority: School Libraries*

For a second year, the Department of Education will provide additional funding to school boards to refresh school library resources and to improve the ratio of school library technician staff to students. The funding will help libraries expand their collections and hire more library technicians. (Education)

### *Priority: School Construction and Renovation*

The addition and alteration program continues to make major improvements at school buildings throughout the province. Five school construction projects are now under way and will carry on in 2006–2007. Work will begin on six additional school projects during the year.

Eighteen schools are being added to and altered under a multi-year program to address building condition, as well as environmental and program issues. (Education)

## Health Promotion and Protection

### *Priority: Physical Education*

To help boards implement Time to Learn recommendations for physical education instructional time (30 minutes per day), the Department of Education will increase targeted funding for boards to hire more physical education teachers for grades 3–6. Development of new curriculum for grades 10–12 is also planned. (Education)

### *Priority: Health-Promoting Schools*

The department of Education will work with the Department of Health Promotion and Protection, school boards, and district health authorities to support the Health-Promoting Schools program.

Over the next several years, the department will work toward achieving the objectives of the Healthy Eating Nova Scotia (2005) strategy for children and youth. The department will introduce the Food and Nutrition Policy and Guidelines for public schools, to be phased in over three years. Work will take place in conjunction with the Department of Health Promotion and Protection to expand and improve school breakfast programs. (Education)

## Community Safety

### *Priority: Safe Schools*

The four-year plan continues to put in place the School Code of Conduct Guidelines. A tracking form to monitor student behavioural incidents is included in the guidelines.

To date, about half of the schools in the province have been trained in Positive Effective Behaviour Supports—a school-wide systems model that includes strategies for creating positive school environments. The process will be completed over the next two years, to the benefit of principals, teachers, students, their families, and communities. (Education)

## Economic Development and Infrastructure

### *Priority: Assistance to Universities and the Nova Scotia Community College*

When Nova Scotia's post-secondary students have access to an equitable and high-quality education, the province increases its chances of sustaining a strong, competitive workforce.

An investment in universities of $21.1 million in 2006–2007 is part of the memorandum of understanding that helps to cap tuition for undergraduate programs.

As part of this investment (Memorandum of Understanding on Funding and Tuition Fees), government will work with the universities and the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) to gather data on the participation of under-represented groups and on the credit-transfer process and make improvements in both areas.

As part of its four-year $123-million investment in the Nova Scotia Community College, government will continue to support curriculum development and the addition of more students. Announced in March 2003, most of the campus projects have been completed. The Annapolis Valley Campus (Middleton and Lawrencetown sites) will be completed later this year, and the new Dartmouth waterfront campus will be completed in 2007. It will open to students in September

of that year. Construction of a second building at the Dartmouth waterfront campus will start in 2007; it is slated for completion in 2009.

The objective of increasing student capacity at the NSCC is on target. Enrolments have been growing steadily during the development project, and by September 2007 the NSCC is expected to be teaching more than 10,000 students.

The Department of Education will help post-secondary institutions implement their Three-Year Accessibility Plans for students with disabilities. Government will also contribute to an Occupational Therapy Master's Program at Dalhousie University as well as provide funding for the Nursing Program at Dalhousie. (Education)

### *Priority: Student Assistance*

In the Blueprint for Building a Better Nova Scotia government committed to increase student debt-relief by doubling the employment and repayment bonuses in the new Student Debt Relief Plan by year three of the current mandate.

The doubling of the repayment and employment bonuses could result in up to 51 per cent of a student's Nova Scotia student loan being forgiven. The bonus payments are intended to encourage students to stay and work in Nova Scotia after graduation, as well as improve the timely repayment of Nova Scotia student loans. It is expected that approximately 5,000 students will benefit each year from the Nova Scotia Debt Reduction Program. The province can then reinvest these payments in assistance for other students. (Education)

### *Priority: Extending Age Limits for Bursary Program for Children in Care*

Government is extending the school incentive program for children in the care and custody of the government, to young people between the ages of 21 and 24. Like many of their counterparts with natural parents, these students will get a helping hand financially to make the most of their educational opportunities. The support will help many avoid unemployment or homelessness. Youth in this age category who are enrolled in post-secondary education will be eligible to receive funds for tuition, books, and related costs. (Community Services)

### *Priority: Labour Market Partnerships for Career Development*

The department will further advance career development initiatives in the province this year. This includes enhancing the Career Options website for adults and career practitioners. Training workshops are also planned for practitioners, to enhance their knowledge of labour market information.

Government will also undertake a number of activities to bolster its Employed Youth–Engaged Society for the Future Strategy, known as EYES. EYES projects in 2006–2007 include guides for parents, communities, and employers for hiring and working with youth. Efforts will also be made to better integrate youth-related programs across government. (Education)

### *Priority: Engaging Youth*

The Department of Education will expand the scope and influence of the Youth Advisory Council and the Provincial Student Education Council within government. In 2006–2007, the two councils will undertake research and develop a strategic plan of interest to members. (Education)

### *Priority: Apprenticeship*

There are many initiatives under way to support youth apprenticeship in Nova Scotia. A marketing and promotion strategy for apprenticeship is being funded for 2006–2007. The strategy will help to promote apprenticeship to employers, educate youth on the opportunities and benefits of pursuing a career in the skilled trades, and inform consumers about the benefits of hiring qualified tradespeople. A new program will also be developed to help tradespeople succeed as business owners and operators. (Education)

### *Priority: Skills Development*

As well, government is providing funding for a coordinator for the One Journey: Work and Learn program. This program leads to employment of individuals who are in receipt of social assistance. A One Journey pilot program indicates a 75 per cent success rate in terms of those who have gone from social assistance to jobs as a result of the program. (Education)

### *Priority: Adult Literacy and Learning*

The Department of Education will advance a number of adult learning and literacy strategies in 2006–2007. It will strengthen partnerships in the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning and revise Level II of the Adult Learning Program with an emphasis on making the transition between community-based and institutional programs.

The department will also work with partners like the Department of Health on the health literacy awareness initiative and with the Seniors' Secretariat on appropriate learning opportunities for seniors. (Education)

# *Education — Measuring Our Performance*

## *Measure:* High School Graduation Rate (Education)

***Outcome:*** Better educated Nova Scotians

This measure is the percentage of students receiving a high school diploma as of that school year, compared to the total number of grade 9 students enrolled three years earlier.

### Performance Highlights and Targets

For the 2004-2005 school year, the graduation rate in Nova Scotia was 84.3 per cent, up from 82.8 per cent the previous year. In fact, the graduation rate has steadily increased since 1999-2000, when it was 79.1 per cent. The Department of Education will implement strategies targeted towards youth at risk of leaving school early, to achieve the performance target of a continued increase in the graduation rate.

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## *Measure:* Implementation of Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC) Report Recommendations (Education)

***Outcome:*** Diverse, inclusive learning environment

This is a measure of an education system that is equitable, accessible and inclusive

### Performance Highlights and Targets

The Department of Education is implementing the recommendations put forward in the Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC) Report to address the issues of racial equity in education raised in the report.

By 2005-2006, 25 of the 30 recommendations in the BLAC Report were begun and/or implemented. Government continues to work towards implementing or initiating all recommendations from the BLAC Report by 2007-2008.

# 4. The Economy

The economy is putting in a strong performance. Job numbers are growing steadily. Confidence is increasing in our business climate. For the fifth year in a row we are tabling a balanced budget. In the year ahead, we will continue to make the decisions that demonstrate fiscal responsibility.

With the improvements in our financial picture and economy, we are increasingly able to make strategic investments that we know will make life better for Nova Scotians and allow them to keep more of their hard-earned money.

In 2006–2007, government is updating its economic growth strategy with the publication of Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity (2006). As a companion piece, government plans to release a Nova Scotia Export Strategy.

We will also be launching a Nova Scotia Gateway Strategy in 2006–2007, to provide transportation and economic services to Canada that are built on the surging growth in trade between North America and Asia.

The Come to Life initiative will continue to spread the word this year about Nova Scotia as a great place to live, invest, do business, get an education, and visit. And tourism activities are expected to have a positive impact on our overall economic performance.

Improving the province's business climate will be another major goal for the government in 2006–2007, through efforts such as the Better Regulation Initiative. This initiative is making Nova Scotia a more business-friendly location through the avoidance of red tape.

To fill skills gaps and meet other demographic challenges, we are creating the conditions to bring more people into the workforce from under-represented groups, among them older workers, African Nova Scotians, Aboriginals, and people with disabilities. We are working hard to train more youth in relevant fields. We continue to welcome new skills to both rural and urban Nova Scotia through immigration, and we are planning an ex-pat recruitment campaign to attract information technology workers back to the province to ensure that a labour pool exists to grow the IT sector further.

We are also mindful of the need for Nova Scotians to have the infrastructure tools they require. Roads, bridges, information technology, public transit, and municipal services all play a part in the economic development of the province. We will continue spending in these areas to enhance economic growth.

# Economic Priorities 2006–2007

## Economic Development and Infrastructure

### Priority: More Competitive Taxes

The Government of Nova Scotia recognizes that taxation can play a vital role in creating a favourable business climate and encouraging economic growth. This year's budget will introduce tax measures that will help to build a more competitive playing field to attract and keep businesses.

Measures to reduce personal income tax are being introduced, in a realistic, sustainable way, to help Nova Scotians keep more of their own money.

The province is also looking at ways to reduce taxes that will help Nova Scotians with the burden of rising home-heating fuel costs.

### Priority: Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity (2006)

In April 2006, government launched an updated five-year economic development strategy that it will begin to implement in 2006–2007. Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity builds on the progress made under Opportunities for Prosperity (2000) and pulls together government's planning and strategic thinking around support for economic growth, from innovation to energy to trade and the environment.

Sustainable competitiveness, the concept at the core of the new strategy, aims to create prosperity by responding to shifts in global consumer demand for environmentally responsible products and services. These markets require us to use our resources wisely, thereby ensuring the long-term viability of our industries.

Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity will be used to shape government's economic decisions, including investments and industry challenges. The strategy includes a set of common criteria that government will use when making investments designed to grow the economy.

The strategy also promotes growth and renewal by encouraging diversity and eliminating waste—of money, resources, ideas, talents, and potential.

During the next year, work will focus on four priority areas: increasing productivity, increasing renewable energy sources, developing the Atlantic Gateway, and building a skilled workforce. (Office of Economic Development)

### Priority: Better Regulation Initiative

The quality of regulation is increasingly recognized as a business success factor. Businesses succeed when regulation protects society but also lets business do what it does best—create jobs and stimulate economic prosperity.

Since the Red Tape Reduction Task Force in 2004, Nova Scotia has become a national leader in streamlining administrative processes. Through the Nova Scotia Business Registry and its expanded online services, businesses can now apply for, pay for, and renew more than 60 different licences, permits, registrations, and certifications online. Government has reviewed as many as 150 acts and regulations, leading to the launch of the Better Regulation Initiative in 2005. Improvements have already been made in a number of sectors, including standards affecting amusement rides, food safety, and commercial diving.

In 2006–2007, the Better Regulation Initiative has work under way on four separate fronts to improve business competitiveness through the avoidance of red tape. The project is, at the same time, designed to ensure that regulations continue to protect the public, the environment, and our communities.

Government is building a strong network of regulatory coordinators across departments to ensure that a regulation is the best solution for whatever situation it is designed to address.

A government/industry effort is under way to assess the accumulated impact of regulations on small and medium-sized business. A pilot project is looking at the approval processes needed to start up or operate an inn in Nova Scotia.

Government is measuring the cost of regulation by measuring the time it takes a business to meet requirements such as finding the right forms, filling them out, and submitting them to departments and agencies. In 2006–2007, baseline data will be collected and reported. It will be an important standard against which to measure our performance in reducing the regulatory burden we find and reporting regularly on our performance.

The fourth aspect of Better Regulation—the Competitiveness and Compliance initiative (CCI) at the Department of Environment and Labour—is changing the way laws are designed, communicated, and enforced. The CCI will make a significant contribution to the competitiveness of Nova Scotia's economy and allow the department to improve its ability to protect the environment, public health, and employee and public safety. Government will do so by designing better regulations, providing more training for inspectors, making information easier to understand to help business comply with laws, reducing unnecessary regulatory requirements, and measuring and monitoring performance. (Environment and Labour, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, Office of Economic Development, Treasury and Policy Board)

### *Priority: Atlantic Gateway to North America*

Government will be launching a Nova Scotia Gateway Strategy in 2006–2007, to support the lead being taken by the transportation industry in capturing a significant share of the surging growth in trade traffic between North America and Asia.

The Department of Transportation and Public Works is leading government's work on a coordinated collaborative effort to help key transportation service providers redirect a major portion of this trade into North America through Nova Scotia via the Suez Canal.

An interdepartmental team has begun work on identifying the infrastructure investments that will be required, as well as the policy and public/private action needed to make Nova Scotia a more prominent international gateway. The success of this initiative will depend on a close working partnership among all levels of government and the private sector.

The primary direct benefits will be increased federal transportation investment in Nova Scotia and the economic benefits generated by subsequent increased trade flows into and through the province and exports out of the province. (Transportation and Public Works, Office of Economic Development, Nova Scotia Business Inc., Intergovernmental Affairs)

### *Priority: Land Transportation*

The province of Nova Scotia is investing a total of $176 million in capital improvements for roads and highways in 2006-2007, more than triple the investment of five years ago and $34 million more than last year.

The rising investment reflects both more activity and higher costs for inputs such as labour and materials, particularly oil-based asphalt.

Highlights of the department's construction program for highways in 2006–2007 include

- completion of Highway 103 twinning from Otter Lake to Upper Tantallon
- completion of the new Highway 103 Barrington
- completion of the Highway 125 Coxheath Interchange
- completion of the Highway 118 Wright Avenue Interchange
- continuation of Highway 101 twinning from St. Croix to Three Mile Plains and from Falmouth to Avonport

This is also year four of the five-year Steel Truss Bridge Program.

Highway maintenance work will be carried out on rural roads throughout the year. This will include increased asphalt patching, ditching and gravelling, shoulder repairs, and brush cutting. Funding for the

work is being increased from $10 million to $20 million over a four-year period under the Road Improvement Money program, known as RIM.

Last year, the fund increased by $2.5 million, and this year it will go up an additional $2.5 million, bringing the total for 2006–2007 to $17.5 million. A further $2.5 million is being invested in improving the safety of our roads through enhancements such as guardrails, line painting, and signage.

This year's spending on provincial roads and highways offers benefits to both local and provincial economies. Building, repaving, and repairing Nova Scotia's land routes will make them safer for motorists and smoother and more efficient as vital trading and transportation links in our economy. (Transportation and Public Works)

### *Priority: Export Strategy*

Total trade in Canada represents over 70 per cent of the country's GDP, and a small market like Nova Scotia's must trade to survive. The province's proposed export strategy will build the potential of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and position Nova Scotia as a reliable trading partner.

In 2006–2007, the provincial trade committee will continue to support the development of exports of Nova Scotia SMEs. Priorities for the year include an export expansion pilot program, a state of trade report, and an action plan to guide implementation of the export development strategy.

The strategy is closely aligned with the province's updated economic development plan, Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity (2006). It recognizes the importance of exports as a way to renew financial capital resources, innovation, productivity, and a strong labour market. (Office of Economic Development, Nova Scotia Business Inc., InNOVAcorp, Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Energy, Environment and Labour, Intergovernmental Affairs, Natural Resources, Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

### *Priority: Trade Missions*

Nova Scotia Business Inc. (NSBI) plans to increase the number of trade missions and market development programs delivered by its export development team in 2006–2007. These efforts are consistent with the direction provided by the province's refreshed economic development strategy, Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity. (Nova Scotia Business Inc.)

### *Priority: International Business Development Activity*

NSBI will continue to take a targeted and aggressive approach to attract businesses to the province that have a strong fit with Nova Scotia's assets, thereby providing for long-term sustainability. Key sectors

include IT, defence and aerospace, energy, life sciences, and financial services.

In addition, with recent successes like Research in Motion and CGI, NSBI will take a more aggressive approach to attracting higher-valued divisions of companies to the province (e.g., research and development). This approach involves targeting the highest skills possible, to mesh with the province's strong academic community. The increased emphasis on higher-end, higher-valued projects is consistent with the government's economic strategy to create greater prosperity throughout the province. (Nova Scotia Business Inc.)

### *Priority: Ex-Pat Recruitment*

Nova Scotia Business Inc. has helped clients create more than 3,500 information technology jobs, which are in the process of coming online in the province. An ex-pat recruitment campaign is planned for 2006–2007 that will help ensure a labour pool exists to further grow the IT sector in Nova Scotia. (Nova Scotia Business Inc.)

### *Priority: Strategic Investment Funds*

NSBI intends to increase the use of this successful tool to facilitate the growth of existing Nova Scotia companies in strategic growth-oriented sectors such as IT, defence and aerospace, financial services, and the life sciences.

Currently, projects under the Strategic Investment Fund (Payroll Rebate) that create fewer than 50 full-time equivalent positions (FTEs) are considered only if there is high strategic value or strong economic benefit. For 2006–2007, Nova Scotia Business Inc. intends to give greater consideration to projects that fit existing eligibility requirements but may not meet the 50-FTE requirement. (Nova Scotia Business Inc.)

### *Priority: Business Retention and Expansion*

In conjunction with regional development authorities and the federal government, the Office of Economic Development will establish a rural business retention and expansion (BRE) pilot project in six counties of mainland Nova Scotia in 2006–2007, building on work previously done in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) and by Nova Scotia Business Inc. BRE programs are proven community development tools that help identify threats to the growth and long-term success of local small businesses.

The pilot will be extended to the rest of the province as success is achieved. Business in the pilot area and the HRM represent approximately 75 per cent of all businesses registered in the province. The program is built on a foundation of proactive business visitation and is expected to identify business growth opportunities and lead to increased referrals to programs and services of organizations like NSBI. (Office of Economic Development, Nova Scotia Business Inc.)

### *Priority: Research and Development*

The Office of Economic Development will continue to support the operation of the Brain Repair Centre in 2006–2007, contributing to the centre's leading-edge research into cures for brain injury and disease.

The centre will be a main tenant in the proposed Life Sciences Research Institute facility, a major piece of research and development infrastructure in which the province has invested through the Nova Scotia Research and Innovation Trust Fund. (Office of Economic Development, InNOVAcorp)

### *Priority: Cluster Development*

In 2006–2007, InNOVAcorp will complete Phase I of the Woodside Knowledge Park to accommodate the Ocean Nutrition Canada micro-encapsulation facility.

InNOVAcorp will also work to ensure that the remainder of the park can be developed for best use and recruitment of other knowledge industry tenants.

Going forward, InNOVAcorp will look to combine the physical facilities it manages to provide a critical mass of incubation infrastructure and an expanding affiliate client and affiliate incubator network. (InNOVAcorp)

### *Priority: Mentoring*

In 2006–2007, to further meet the needs of clients, InNOVAcorp will strengthen its expertise in key sectors, such as information and communication technology and life sciences, and actively monitor emerging sectors (e.g., aerospace and defence) to ensure appropriate levels of corresponding in-house mentoring resources. (InNOVAcorp)

### *Priority: Access to Seed Capital and Venture Capital*

In 2006–2007, to further meet the access-to-capital requirements of high-potential Nova Scotia entrepreneurs, InNOVAcorp will continue to proactively look to invest in opportunities that offer the best potential for commercial success and financial sustainability. InNOVAcorp manages the Nova Scotia First Fund (NSFF), which has been a source of early-stage venture capital. The funds managed by the corporation have been active in investments as lead or syndicated partners with angel, seed, and venture capital funds and institutional and strategic investors. (InNOVAcorp)

### *Priority: Rural Innovation*

InNOVAcorp will increase support for rural innovation in 2006–2007 through co-management of the Nova Scotia Co-operative Council's Proof-of-Concept Fund. By encouraging university students and researchers to prepare business plans that

prove their business concept, the fund serves to advance projects to the point where they may be considered for follow-on investment. The corporation will promote relationships with providers of early-stage capital, including government agencies and departments, angel networks, associations, and private-sector partners. (InNOVAcorp)

### *Priority: Agri-food and Seafood Competitiveness*

The Department of Agriculture and Nova Scotia Fisheries and Aquaculture will continue to support the efforts of the province's agri-food and seafood businesses to expand domestic and international markets. Government will also help the sector develop new and value-added products and services, as well as develop and adopt innovative new technologies and processes.

To achieve these broad objectives and enhance economic growth in coastal and rural communities, a number of approaches and initiatives will continue in 2006–2007 and beyond:

- the new Atlantic BioVenture Centre at the AgriTECH Park in Bible Hill will work with the primary and processing sectors on bio-resource value-chain development and technology transfer
- primary and secondary industry development will help renew the pork, tree fruit, horticulture, and traditional seafood sectors and strengthen the emerging organic food and wine sectors
- a new aquaculture development strategy including a new federal/provincial aquaculture development agreement will help propel this promising sector forward over the next five years
- a trade plan that aligns with the province's overall trade strategy will be developed to focus on agri-food, seafood, bio-products, and related technologies.

The agriculture, fisheries, and aquaculture sectors contribute to a healthy economy in Nova Scotia, contributing $874 million to the province's GDP in 2003–2004; in total, the seafood and agri-food sectors were responsible for $1.4 billion in exports in 2004. According to the 2001 census, roughly 30,000 Nova Scotians earn their living from the land or sea or food manufacturing, while another 40,000 work in food distribution or food service. (Agriculture, Nova Scotia Fisheries and Aquaculture)

### *Priority: Lobster Support Program*

Partnering with harvesters, scientists, and others, Nova Scotia Fisheries and Aquaculture will conduct a year-round lobster-testing program in southwest Nova Scotia that will give harvesters information about lobster quality and allow them to

modify their fishery if needed. A project will also be funded in conjunction with the Northumberland Fisheries Museum that will include establishment of a hatchery.

Depending on need, additional projects will be supported in other coastal regions to address resource status and quality. Lobster is Nova Scotia's richest fishery, representing $400 million in landed value. Generating over 8,000 direct jobs for Nova Scotians, the lobster fishery is a major economic driver for Nova Scotia's coastal regions. (Nova Scotia Fisheries and Aquaculture)

### *Priority: Safety and Security of the Food Chain*

Protecting the province's agriculture, fishery, and aquaculture industries against animal and fish disease supports the food industry's efforts to competitively position its products in the marketplace.

In 2006–2007, the Department of Agriculture and Nova Scotia Fisheries and Aquaculture will continue their work with federal and industry partners to identify and respond to animal and fish health and disease prevention issues. Through implementation of the Canada–Nova Scotia Implementation Agreement for the Agriculture Policy Framework and the new Health Protection Act, the Department of Agriculture will improve on-farm bio-security protocols, develop standard food safety and quality systems throughout the food chain, and strengthen co-operation with other levels of government in responding to animal disease issues. (Agriculture, Nova Scotia Fisheries and Aquaculture)

### *Priority: Laboratory Services*

The Department of Agriculture will make enhancements to its laboratory services to benefit a broad spectrum of the agriculture industry. The industry relies on the program to conduct more than 100,000 tests per year, including analysis of soil, feed, water, dairy, and pathology. Lab services are provided in partnership with the Atlantic Veterinary College, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, and the Maritime provinces. (Agriculture)

### *Priority: Sustaining Prosperity from Offshore Energy*

Nova Scotia's offshore energy sector is going through a significant phase of maturity. Offshore revenues are very strong, with royalties alone estimated at $288 million in 2006–2007. However, while current revenues are rising, exploration, which will lead to future developments and revenues, has declined. A wealth of data has been collected on offshore geology and environment, but future investment depends upon a better understanding of what the information means.

To help address the knowledge gap, the province has worked with the universities to create two research associations. One will fund research work on Nova Scotia's

geology and develop new theories on where the best prospects are. The other will work on building a better scientific understanding of the environmental impacts from offshore energy. The province used rising offshore revenues to grant $5.2 million to these two associations to fund their work. In 2006–2007, the agenda is being set, and the first research work is expected to be under way by the end of the first quarter.

The primary purpose of the new associations is to fund research into geological and environmental issues associated with the process to explore, develop, and produce offshore petroleum products. A portion of the funds will also go to emerging technologies that exploit offshore energy renewable resources. For example, Nova Scotia has some of the most powerful tides in the world. Tapping into these tidal currents may provide a new source of electricity. The research effort will help us understand the commercial potential of this new technology and ensure that developments are carefully planned to have no significant negative environmental impacts. (Energy)

### *Priority: Promoting the Energy Sector*

The Department of Energy is increasing its efforts to identify potential investors and market Nova Scotia's petroleum resource potential as well as our business and workforce capacities and capabilities. Based upon the results of our investment in research, the Department will strategically market Nova Scotia to potential investors. Working closely with industry associations such as the Offshore/Onshore Technologies Association of Nova Scotia, the Department will develop and implement an international marketing program. The Department will also monitor economic activity resulting from local energy projects in order to identify, develop and implement strategies that will increase Nova Scotia's market share.

### *Priority: Labour Services*

The Department of Environment and Labour will be introducing a new initiative in 2006–2007 to speed up arbitration for employers and unionized workers and to ensure that workers are fairly represented. The improved services will address unreasonable delays in completing the arbitration process and resolving disputes.

A new arbitrations advisory committee will also be established to help the department renew its list of arbitrators and to provide advice. The formation of this committee flows from the tripartite forum held in 2005. (Environment and Labour)

### *Priority: Welcoming More New Nova Scotians*

In 2005, Nova Scotia welcomed 1,927 immigrants, up 8 per cent from 2004. Under the Nova Scotia Nominee Program—the province's primary immigrant attraction tool—newcomers from 55 different countries are now settling in 48 different communities across the province.

We have increased our target for 2006 under the Nominee Program to 400 nominees and their families. We hope to remove all limits by 2007.

With more than 1,000 applications received and over 400 families already nominated, that means more than 1,700 newcomers are either here or on their way to live here, and the numbers grow weekly.

The Office of Immigration will continue to work with the federal government to advocate for more settlement funding as immigrant numbers continue to increase. Both federal and provincial funding is provided to not-for-profit organizations to provide language training, employment integration, and other settlement programs.

We will expand the nominee program by creating additional selection categories, including entrepreneur, student, and family business categories. (Office of Immigration)

### *Priority: French Immigration*

The Acadian and francophone community in Nova Scotia has recently embraced the concept of becoming a welcoming community for immigrants, and it is actively pursuing activities related to attracting French-speaking immigrants. The availability of French-language services from the provincial government will be key in making the decision to choose Nova Scotia as their new home. The French-Language Services Act of 2004 confirms the province of Nova Scotia's commitment to promoting the development of its Acadian and francophone community and maintaining for future generations the French language, which contributes to the enhancement of life in Nova Scotia. (Office of Acadian Affairs)

### *Priority: Economic and Cultural Links with Louisiana*

The Office of Acadian Affairs is leading government's work on a memorandum of understanding with the State of Louisiana. Areas that could benefit from this MOU include tourism, culture and heritage; economic development; energy; and education. Departments with an interest in developing a formal relationship with the State will produce action plans to determine future steps. (Office of Acadian Affairs)

### *Priority: Come to Life*

In December 2005, management of the Nova Scotia Come to Life initiative (Brand Nova Scotia) was formally transferred to Communications Nova Scotia (CNS). CNS will work with the private sector to enhance Nova Scotians' pride of place and Nova Scotia's global presence.

Changing perceptions about Nova Scotia will differentiate us from the competition, build up equity in the Nova Scotia brand, and grow our economy by emphasizing our best qualities—the place, the products, the people.

The province has committed to a three-year plan for the initiative. The year 2006–2007 will focus on bringing the Come to Life messages to key arenas throughout Canada, the United States, and worldwide. A corporate framework will be developed to support the initiative through policy delivery. Government will also actively seek out more internal and external partnerships. (Communications Nova Scotia)

### *Priority: Tourism Sector Growth*

The tourism industry, with annual revenues around $1.3 billion and 32,000 jobs, is a major driver of economic development in the province. This year the province will work towards increasing revenues by $25 million, through the implementation of the 2006 Tourism Plan developed by the Nova Scotia Tourism Partnership Council—a public/private sector council mandated to advise government on tourism plans, programs, and investments. Highlights of the plan include

- strengthening transportation access to Nova Scotia
- developing and enhancing signature attractions such as the Joggins Fossils Cliffs site and Interpretive Centre, Peggy's Cove, and Mi'kmawey Debert
- strengthening the Nova Scotia tourism brand in existing markets, including Atlantic Canada, Ontario, Quebec, Europe, and the northeastern United States, and testing new markets in Western Canada.

To support these efforts, the province will increase its investment in tourism by providing an additional $600,000 to strengthen tourism marketing efforts in an increasingly competitive global environment. (Tourism, Culture and Heritage)

### *Priority: Tall Ships 2007*

In 2006, planning is under way to bring back the tall ships festival event in the summer of 2007. The event will bring 30 ships into Halifax Harbour for three days and send a number of ships into some of the other ports around the province. Tall ships events have a greater economic impact in the province than any other event. Through Tall Ships 2000 and 2004, the province realized more than $50 million invested back into the people and the province of Nova Scotia. (Waterfront Development Corporation)

## Families and Communities

### *Priority: Community Development Policy*

Government will continue to implement its community development policy in 2006–2007. The policy improves the way in which government can help communities lead their own development. It is the first step in a long-term process of helping communities tackle the challenges they face.

Objectives for the year include a second conference to showcase successful community development projects, training in community-based leadership, and compilation of community-level data, statistics, and indicators. (Office of Economic Development)

### *Priority: Community Infrastructure*

In 2006–2007, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations will continue to administer the various federal/provincial programs supporting the development of infrastructure that strengthens our communities and provides for a cleaner environment.

This year, approximately $60 million in funding will be directed to core municipal infrastructure and other community projects, with a focus on green municipal infrastructure (i.e., water, wastewater, and solid waste), through the following programs:

- Canada–Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program
- Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund
- Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund
- Gas Tax Agreement
- Transit (Gas Tax) Agreement.

During the 11-year period that the province will be responsible for delivery of these programs (2000–2012), the total funding involved will be more than $463 million in federal/provincial contributions, including the Provincial Capital Assistance Program. (Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

### *Priority: Provincial Capital Assistance Program (PCAP)*

Additional provincial funding will be directed to PCAP in 2006–2007 to reduce the cost burden for municipalities to an affordable level. PCAP allows the government of Nova Scotia to contribute financially toward the cost of high-priority municipal infrastructure projects such as water, sewer disposal, and solid waste projects. (Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)

## Community Safety

### *Priority: Road Weather Information System (RWIS)*

This system will expand by up to three new sites in 2006–2007. Each site has a highway camera to provide the public with regularly updated images of local road conditions.

This year's additions bring the total to 42 cameras that provide road weather information to the travelling public across the province. (Transportation and Public Works)

### *Priority: Volunteer Fire Departments*

The Department of Transportation and Public Works is working with volunteer fire departments and 29 different private dispatch centres. The objective is to develop a strategy that will lead to standardized dispatch protocols that improve efficiencies and public safety. (Transportation and Public Works)

Enhancements to the volunteer fire system in fiscal 2005–2006 included an operations grant of $190,000 to fund the training programs of the Nova Scotia Firefighters School in Waverley and $100,000 to help refurbish the school's burn building, which provides training opportunities for firefighters. These investments add to better on-the-job safety for firefighters and a well-prepared fire service for Nova Scotians. (Environment and Labour)

### *Priority: Workplace Safety*

Employers, labour unions, and injured workers in Nova Scotia will benefit from improvements to our workplace safety and insurance system in 2006–2007. A governance initiative will ensure and enhance consultation among agencies and stakeholders before any new programs or changes are put forward. (Environment and Labour)

## Environment

### *Priority: Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity (2006)*

Sustainable competitiveness, the concept at the core of the province's updated economic development strategy, aims to create prosperity by responding to shifts in global consumer demand for environmentally responsible products and services. These markets require us to use our resources wisely, thereby ensuring the long-term viability of our industries.

The strategy also promotes growth and renewal by encouraging diversity and eliminating waste—of money, resources, ideas, talents, and potential.

During the next year, work will focus on four priority areas—increasing productivity, increasing renewable energy sources, developing the Atlantic Gateway, and building a skilled workforce.

Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity builds on the progress made under Opportunities for Prosperity (2000) and pulls together government's planning and strategic thinking around support for economic growth, from innovation to energy to trade and the environment. (Office of Economic Development)

### *Priority: Salt Management Plan*

The government's Salt Management Plan continues in 2006–2007, with the objective of reducing any potential adverse effects of road salt on the environment. Five new salt storage facilities will be constructed during the year, to better manage the handling of road salt. Government will also install four new truck weigh scales to allow for better monitoring and control of salt use. (Transportation and Public Works)

### *Priority: Leadership in Energy and Design (LEED)*

The Department of Transportation and Public Works is working toward certification in Leadership and Energy Design (LEED) on at least 50 per cent of new government buildings.

LEED certification means increased energy efficiency and reduced pollution from buildings. Based on the Canada Green Building Council standard, LEED certification measures environmental performance over the life of a building. A LEED-certified structure is much more energy efficient, resulting in cost savings on fuel and heating and a reduced impact on the building's environment. (Transportation and Public Works)

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## *The Economy — Measuring Our Performance*

### *Measure:* Balanced/Surplus Budget (Finance)

***Outcome:*** Improved economic climate

This measure reflects government's effective management of the province's financial operating resources.

### Performance Highlights and Targets

The province had a surplus of $165.3 million for the year ended March 31, 2005 (compared to a surplus of $38.1 million in the year ended March 31, 2004). Our forecast surplus for 2005–2006 is $151 million, well above the amount budgeted last year, $63.28 million. The target for future years is to meet the legislated requirements for a balanced budget as well as the debt reduction plan. To achieve this goal, the province must effectively control expenditures while continuing to update and improve fiscal models used to forecast revenue.

### *Measure:* Provincial Net Direct Debt (NDD) as a Percentage of GDP (Finance)

***Outcome:*** Improved economic climate

This is a measure of the province's fiscal sustainability and flexibility. The higher the ratio, the greater the burden of the province's debt on the provincial economy.

### Performance Highlights and Targets

The provincial NDD as a percentage of GDP has decreased to 41.0 per cent as at March 31, 2005 (2004—42.6 per cent; 2003—45.1 per cent; 2002—46.6 per cent). The province has targeted a continuing of this downward trend as its goal. Maintaining expenditure control throughout the government reporting entity is the primary strategy to achieve this target.

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### *Measure:* Credit Rating by Major Rating Agencies (Finance)

***Outcome:*** Improved economic climate

A credit rating is a rating agency's evaluation of a borrower's ability and willingness to pay interest and to repay principal. Rating firms provide investors with measures of credit quality of bonds or other financial instruments. A credit rating affects the borrower's debt-servicing costs and the investor's rate of return, since an investor will demand a higher interest rate on a more risky, lower-rated security.

### Performance Highlights and Targets

During 2005–2006, the Dominion Bond Rating Service improved their outlook on Nova Scotia's debt to A(low), positive outlook, from A(low), stable outlook. Standard & Poor's maintained their rating at A with positive outlook, and Moody's rating also remained unchanged at A2 with positive outlook. The province's target is to sustain or improve these credit ratings. To achieve this goal, the province will continue to make strong presentations to rating agencies on a regular basis that highlight our financial position.

## *Measure:* Market Growth — Agriculture and Fisheries (Agriculture; Fisheries and Aquaculture)

***Outcome:*** Improved economic activity in rural areas

The agricultural, fisheries, and aquaculture sectors contribute to a healthy economy in Nova Scotia. In 2003–2004, the agriculture and agri-food industry contributed an estimated $874 million to the province's gross domestic product. Fish landings were valued at $707 million in 2004 and the seafood and agri-food sectors were responsible for $1.4 billion in exports. According to 2001 census statistics, 30,000 Nova Scotians are employed in agriculture, fishing, and food manufacturing. Another 44,000 Nova Scotians are employed in food distribution and food service.

### Performance Highlights and Targets

| | **2004-2005 Actual** |
|---|---|
| Farm gate value of aquaculture industry | $45 million (estimated) |
| Value of sport fishing industry | $85 million |
| Fish products exports | $1.09 billion |
| Value of boat building, domestic | $54 million |
| Value of agriculture production (farm cash receipts) | $445.1 million |
| Value of agriculture and fisheries exports | $1.36 billion |

# 5. The Environment

Our natural resources draw tourists, attract businesses to the province, and enhance our quality of life. They contribute to the appeal of our communities and fuel our economy. For all these reasons, Nova Scotians cherish the province's natural features, biodiversity, and scenic beauty. We believe, simply, that you can live better in Nova Scotia, and we want to keep it that way.

The environment is a joy in itself. It is also a competitive advantage in terms of the high quality of life Nova Scotia can offer.

The viability and competitiveness of natural resources sectors like forestry, fisheries, minerals, and agriculture, as well as the tourism sector, are also dependent on practices that are environmentally sustainable.

Nova Scotia earns $1.3 billion in annual tourism revenues and employs 32,000 Nova Scotians in the industry, largely on the basis of our status as Canada's foremost seacoast vacation destination. Outdoor and nature-related tourism activities are a growing segment of our tourism industry.

Conserved natural lands provide a wide range of benefits. They allow us to experience nature, give us comfort and security in knowing they exist in their natural state, and provide clean air and water that give rise to a whole host of further advantages. The non-timber benefits of the province's forests include climate regulation, soil formation, waste treatment, food production, and biological control.

The vast majority of Nova Scotians live near or on the coast and are keenly aware of the extensive coastal infrastructure on which we depend for our living, our health, and our enjoyment of life. Most agree strongly that the province's natural capital—its water, air, plants, animals, minerals, lands, and ecosystems—must be preserved to sustain prosperity and health. The province's Green Plan and related activities for 2006–2007 and beyond are designed to do just that.

## Families and Communities

### *Priority: Environmental Home Assessment Program*

In 2006–2007, the Department of Environment and Labour will begin a two-year pilot program to help 1400 households protect the quality of their drinking water and conserve water resources through the proper maintenance and use of household wells, septic systems, and oil tanks.

In year one, 400 homeowners who are not on public water and wastewater systems will receive an environmental assessment of their homes by a trained team, and a package of environmental protection items

and information materials. The program will provide two provincial employees and fund eight positions with environmental non-government organizations (ENGOs).

In year two, the program will expand to benefit an additional 1,000 homeowners, and the regional employment will increase to 10 positions.

Household water and wastewater services must function properly to protect public health and the environment. Approximately 400,000 people in rural Nova Scotia depend on these systems.

A complementary program to support the repair or replacement of failed septic systems for low-income Nova Scotians will also be available.

The program is also designed to accelerate water-quality monitoring efforts in order to provide improved data for the purposes of decision making around this public health issue. (Environment and Labour)

## Health Promotion and Protection

### *Priority: Water Quality*

Nova Scotians need a dependable supply of clean, safe water. Access to this valuable resource is a key issue for agriculture, industry, municipalities, and homeowners. By protecting the resource, we can improve public health, protect the environment, and increase opportunities for economic prosperity. We will build upon the success of the Drinking Water Strategy by addressing a broader range of water quality and water quantity issues. This will include increasing our water monitoring, reporting, and decision-making capacity. (Environment and Labour)

### *Priority: Air Quality*

Poor air quality can affect our health, lead to increased health-care costs, and also damage our natural resources. The Department of Environment and Labour's air-quality management program promotes emission reductions and monitors for compliance. Significant monitoring is done throughout the province, especially in industrial areas.

In 2006–2007, the department will hire an additional air-quality specialist and continue the program to protect our outdoor air quality. Regulations, programs, and emission-based fees paid by major industrial sources support work to reduce pollutants that lead to issues such as smog, climate change, and the thinning of the ozone layer. (Environment and Labour)

## Community Safety

### *Priority: Operational Response Capacity of EMO (NS)*

In 2005–2006, a historically high number of hurricanes were recorded, many of which threatened to come ashore in Atlantic Canada. Weather professionals predict that this trend will continue throughout this

decade, resulting in greater frequency and duration of hurricanes and tropical storms. These may impact the Nova Scotia environment in the form of tidal surges, flooding, and coastal erosion.

In 2006–2007, redesign of the ergonomic and structural layout of the Joint Emergency Operations Centre (JEOC) will take place, and EMO will hire staff to manage E-Team, the province's emergency information management system. With these enhancements, the ability of the Emergency Management Office (EMO) to track storms and advise government will improve, and action will be taken to mitigate the effects of weather emergencies on the environment. (EMO)

## Economic Development and Infrastructure

### *Priority: Establish EMO Training Centre*

The possibility of events such as explosions, hazardous materials spills, and commercial or industrial fires occurring will continue in Nova Scotia as elsewhere. An increased demand for training in how to manage such events is expected from municipal and provincial governments.

To meet the demand, a key component of the multi-year training strategy of the Emergency Management Office is the establishment of a full-time training centre in Nova Scotia. The centre will also serve as EMO and E-911's emergency relocation site, as well as a relocation facility for the Premier and Executive Council.

The school will attract students from both government and the private sector, to enable integrated training opportunities with federal, provincial, and municipal partners. The facility will be run by a full-time training coordinator, together with administrative support. (EMO)

## Environment

### *Priority: Smart Energy Choices*

In the second half of 2005–2006, the government launched a significant new initiative to help Nova Scotians reduce their energy use. Making Smart Energy Choices means lower energy bills and less reliance on fossil fuels, which have an impact on climate change. The government has renewed the Smart Energy Program for 2006–2007 with a budget of $10 million.

The program has a number of components and has been designed to work closely with federal initiatives. In each case, the program helps Nova Scotians make permanent positive changes in their use of energy. Guidance is given on how to make homes more energy efficient, and homeowner grants are available to put the recommendations into effect. Solar water heating systems and wood stoves are encouraged. Public education and information kits are being made widely available. By helping Nova Scotians help themselves, energy can become more green and sustainable. (Energy)

### *Priority: Green Plan*

The Department of Environment and Labour will continue to implement and build upon the Green Plan: Towards a Sustainable Environment (2003), which makes a key link between green values and future economic growth.

Other jurisdictions cite both the Green Plan and Nova Scotia's drinking water strategy as good examples of a strategic approach, and use them as models for their own programs.

Our recycling and waste management have also made us national and international leaders. We now divert 50 per cent of our waste from landfills—the highest waste-diversion rate in North America. As well, our Solid Waste Resource Management Strategy has originated many new businesses, export opportunities, spin-off industries, new technologies, and new jobs. The government's economic development strategy seeks to apply the success we have enjoyed from reducing waste to almost every other area of the economy.

The recently completed Environmental Management Policy for government will help departments incorporate environmental considerations into all policies before they are introduced and will encourage departments to lead by example in such things as energy efficiency and procurement.

Working with our federal, provincial, and municipal counterparts, the province hopes to improve the sustainability of our environment and key industries. Examples include our efforts to complement oil and gas production through generation of electricity from renewable resources such as wind power and low-impact tidal-power technologies. (Environment and Labour, Energy)

### *Priority: Climate Change Impact Analysis*

The Department of Natural Resources will prepare an analysis of the potential impacts of climate change for each of the department's areas of responsibility: forests, minerals, parks, wildlife, and Crown lands. Results of the analysis will provide background information needed for the development of new approaches to guide resource management decisions. (Natural Resources, Energy)

### *Priority: Conserved Lands/Protected Areas*

In partnership with stakeholders, government will continue to work towards a comprehensive system of protected areas for Nova Scotia. We will begin by designating five new nature reserves on land donated by private landholders who have asked to have their lands protected. (Environment and Labour)

### *Priority: Ducks Unlimited Centre*

In 2006–2007, the Department of Natural Resources will add four seasonal staff to the new Ducks Unlimited wetlands/interpretive centre at the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park. This is a co-operative venture between the province and Ducks Unlimited that will provide an upgraded marsh in addition to the educational centre. Both will enhance public awareness of wetland habitats and waterfowl. Other benefits are expected to be increased local and out-of-province tourist visitation and educational field trips, as well as use by scientific research and veterinary institutes. (Natural Resources)

### *Priority: Park Maintenance and Restoration*

In 2006–2007, funding will go towards the restoration and repair of infrastructure within the provincial park system. This is required to ensure that outdoor recreation opportunities that support a healthy lifestyle remain available to the public. Infrastructure that is now beyond its normal operational life will be replaced using modern design standards, and a cost-effective preventative maintenance schedule will be put in place. (Natural Resources)

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### *Measure:* Drinking Water Quality (Environment and Labour)

***Outcome:*** Healthy environment

This measure tracks the proportion of the population served by municipal water supplies that meet health-based criteria for bacteriological quality, as stated in the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality.

### Performance Highlights and Targets

Approximately 60 per cent of Nova Scotians obtain their drinking water from municipal water supplies. In 2004, 98.4 per cent of the population served by municipal water supplies received water meeting national health-based criteria for bacteriological quality at all times during the calendar year, an improvement over prior years (2001—96.5 per cent; 2002—96.5 per cent; 2003—95.7 per cent).

Our target is to continue to maximize the percentage of population served by municipal water supplies that meet national guidelines for bacteriological quality, through the Nova Scotia drinking water strategy, supporting municipal water supply protection plans, and enforcing the Water and Wastewater Facilities and Public Drinking Water Supplies Regulations and the Guidelines for Monitoring Public Water Supplies.

### ***Measure:*** **Sulphur Dioxide Emissions (Environment and Labour)**

***Outcome:*** Healthy environment

### Performance Highlights and Targets

Sulphur dioxide ($SO_2$) is a major contributor to acid rain and smog and can have significant effects on human health if concentrations are elevated.

### Performance Highlights and Targets

Sulphur dioxide emissions have fluctuated over the past five years. In 2004, approximately 161,000 tonnes (estimate) of $SO_2$ were emitted in the province, primarily through electricity generation.

The Air Quality Regulations, amended in March of 2005, lowered the provincial $SO_2$ emission cap to 141,750 tonnes per year. Reductions will be accomplished by working with major emitters to reduce $SO_2$ emissions through the use of lower-sulphur fuels and technological upgrades.

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### ***Measure:*** **Solid Waste Disposal (Environment and Labour)**

***Outcome:*** Healthy environment

The average amount of waste discarded by each person provides an indication of the level of participation in waste disposal options.

### Performance Highlights and Targets

Statistics Canada provides data every two years on solid waste disposal rates across Canada. The most recent data available is for 2002. Each Canadian, on average, disposed of 780 kg of waste. In Nova Scotia, we disposed of a little over half of that amount, at 417 kg per person. The Atlantic region rate was 564 kg per person.

Our target is to maintain the Nova Scotia disposal rate below the national disposal rate through continued public education, promotion of industry product stewardship, and enforcement of the Solid Waste Resource Management Regulations.

### *Measure:* Environmental Farm Plans (Agriculture and Fisheries)

***Outcome:*** Sustainable environment

Conservation and sustainable development of soil, water, air, and bio-diversity is enhanced by increasing the number of farms that adopt environmental farm plans (EFP).

## Performance Highlights and Targets

As of March 2005, approximately 670 farms participated in the EFP initiative. This represents 27 per cent of 2,400 registered farms. There has been a steady increase in the percentage of participants in the EFP initiative. The goal is for 50 per cent of registered farms to have completed EFPs by 2007–2008.

# 6. Government Services

Maintaining a strong public service is the principal way that government can continue to improve the effectiveness of government programs and services.

In 2006–2007, the government of Nova Scotia will continue to implement the comprehensive human resources strategy that it launched in 2004–2005 to respond to current human resources and demographic challenges.

To be a preferred employer, government needs to attract and retain the talent required to ensure that it meets its mandate to deliver high-quality services to the citizens of Nova Scotia. This year, led by the Public Service Commission, the government will focus on strategies to address employee wellness and other workforce challenges such as competition from external organizations, being representative of the diverse communities we are as Nova Scotians, generational differences in employee expectations, and an aging workforce.

Led by the Office of Acadian Affairs, the government will also pursue joint opportunities for increasing the level of French language services available from government.

The government will further strengthen government accountability processes in 2006–2007 as well. This work includes defining what programs and services we have and strengthening the relationship between government and its agencies, boards, and commissions.

Systems that we use to manage government information will also be upgraded and projects launched to develop new data systems and policies. Meantime, government departments will continue to upgrade electronic service delivery to Nova Scotians.

## Government Services Priorities 2006–2007

### *Priority: French Language Services*

In 2006–2007, the Office of Acadian Affairs will expand and promote its translation and other services offered to government and work with the Public Service Commission to increase government's French-language capacity, helping government deliver more services in French.

In 2006–2007, government is continuing to invest in a French Language Services pilot project that was launched in 2005. This project is cost-shared 50 per cent between Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations and funds from the Canada–Nova Scotia Agreement on French-language Services, which is co-managed by Acadian Affairs and the Department of Canadian Heritage.

The Service Nova Scotia French-language Services plan is a pilot to help government find ways to provide quality services in French to Acadian and francophone Nova Scotians wishing to do business with government in their mother tongue.

Progress has been made to date on each part of the Service Nova Scotia five-point plan. A French-Language Services Coordinator has been at work in the department since August 2005. Bilingual customer service is available by telephone in all areas through the contact centre, and in-person at the Dartmouth Access Centre and in Yarmouth. Translation of the SNSMR website is under way, with the following online services now available in French: vehicle registration renewal; birth, death and marriage certificates; knowledge test and road test receipts; change of address, and fine payments.

Work is currently under way on the translation of frequently used forms and publications such as the driver's handbook. The translation of the permits directory and other business-related information sources will allow businesses owned or operated by Acadians or francophones to conduct business with government in their language of choice. This will expand economic opportunities and contribute to the preservation and growth of the Acadian and francophone community. (Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, Office of Acadian Affairs)

### *Priority: Healthy Workplace*

The Healthy Workplace Initiative will build capacity across government to champion the creation of supportive work environments for government's 9,000 employees. One of the objectives of the initiative is to achieve PEP Level 1 certification from the National Quality Institute (NQI).

With the assurance of a safe and supportive workplace, government employees can contribute most effectively in their roles of delivering high-quality public service.

Through this initiative, the government also has the opportunity to lead by example and partner with other employers in improving the health of our workforce.

Research shows that healthy workplace initiatives reduce absenteeism, lower treatment costs, and reduce drug claims, but the benefits go beyond health-care cost savings. A healthy workplace makes it easier to recruit and retain employees and increase productivity. A well-established link exists between increased employee satisfaction and improved customer service, and organizations have observed that families and communities also experience health benefits from the domino effect of healthy workplace initiatives. (Public Service Commission)

### *Priority: Valuing Diversity*

By creating a diverse workplace, government achieves a greater representation of the people it serves, thereby enhancing service. Based on the available data, 7.4 per cent of the Nova Scotia public service workforce is represented by self-identified designated groups. While there has been some minor fluctuation in the percentage share that designated groups have of the total public service, each of the designated groups is under-represented relative to the Nova Scotia workforce population. This indicates the need for more attention to diversity management, a priority area of the Public Service Commission in 2006–2007. (Public Service Commission)

### *Priority: Third-Party Entity Governance and Accountability*

This multi-year initiative will continue in 2006–2007. Treasury and Policy Board (TPB) is working to strengthen governance and accountability policies and procedures among third-party entities that are consolidated in the province's financial statements. For 2006–2007, TPB will develop orientation materials for use by members of government boards. TPB will also prepare an analysis of the capacity in departments and at TPB to complement improved governance and accountability and will make recommendations to Cabinet on refining the appointment process and implementing remuneration guidelines for members of government's agencies, boards, and commissions. (Treasury and Policy Board)

### *Priority: Program Inventory and Costing*

As part of government's efforts to improve accountability, it is developing an inventory of programs with related cost information. The inventory will provide important information to help government assess the effectiveness and economy of programs and services and to formulate policy and funding decisions.

Government's priority for 2006–2007 is to update the web-based application, allowing for improvements such as archiving and better reporting ability. The costing methodology will continue to be developed and piloted in several departments. A users group will be established to provide guidance on further improvements to the system. (Treasury and Policy Board)

### *Priority: Processing Drivers Licences and Birth Certificates*

The government is moving the systems that run the Registry of Motor Vehicles, Vital Statistics, and Motor Vehicle Tax to a new computer platform. The Mainframe Modernization project is expected to be completed by March 2007.

Newer technologies are needed to replace the 15-year-old, outdated mainframe that runs the systems currently and to be ready to meet emerging business requirements. (Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations)